MARVEL COMICS
2099
WORLD OF TOMORROW
APR '97
TO ALL THINGS...
...AN ENDING!
DIRECT EDITION
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HUMANITY'S "LAST REFUGE" FROM THE FLOODINGS THAT HAVE OVERTAKEN THIS FUTURE WORLD IS A PRE-HISTORIC JUNGLE KNOWN AS THE SAVAGE LAND.
IT IS HERE THAT A DECISIVE BATTLE FOR THE FATE OF THAT PARTICULAR SPECIES' RIGHT TO THIS PLANET WAS JUST FOUGHT.
THANKS TO THIS MAN...
...HUMANITY WON.
TOMORROW BEGINS TODAY, PEOPLE.
PUT YOUR BACKS INTO IT!
THIS IS VICTOR TEN EAGLES.
HE IS A MAN OF COURAGE--A MAN OF HONOR--AND AT THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT IN HISTORY...

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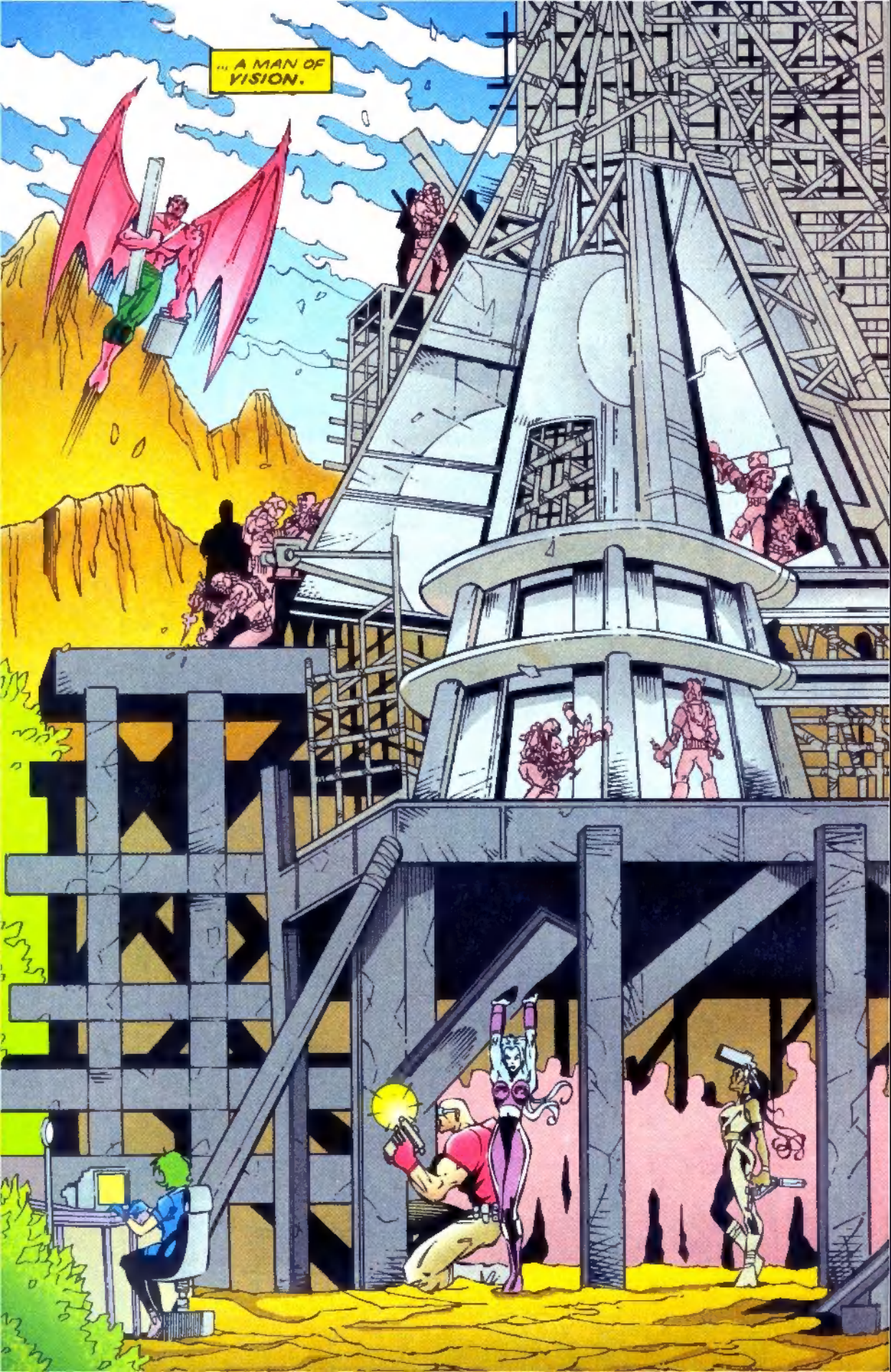
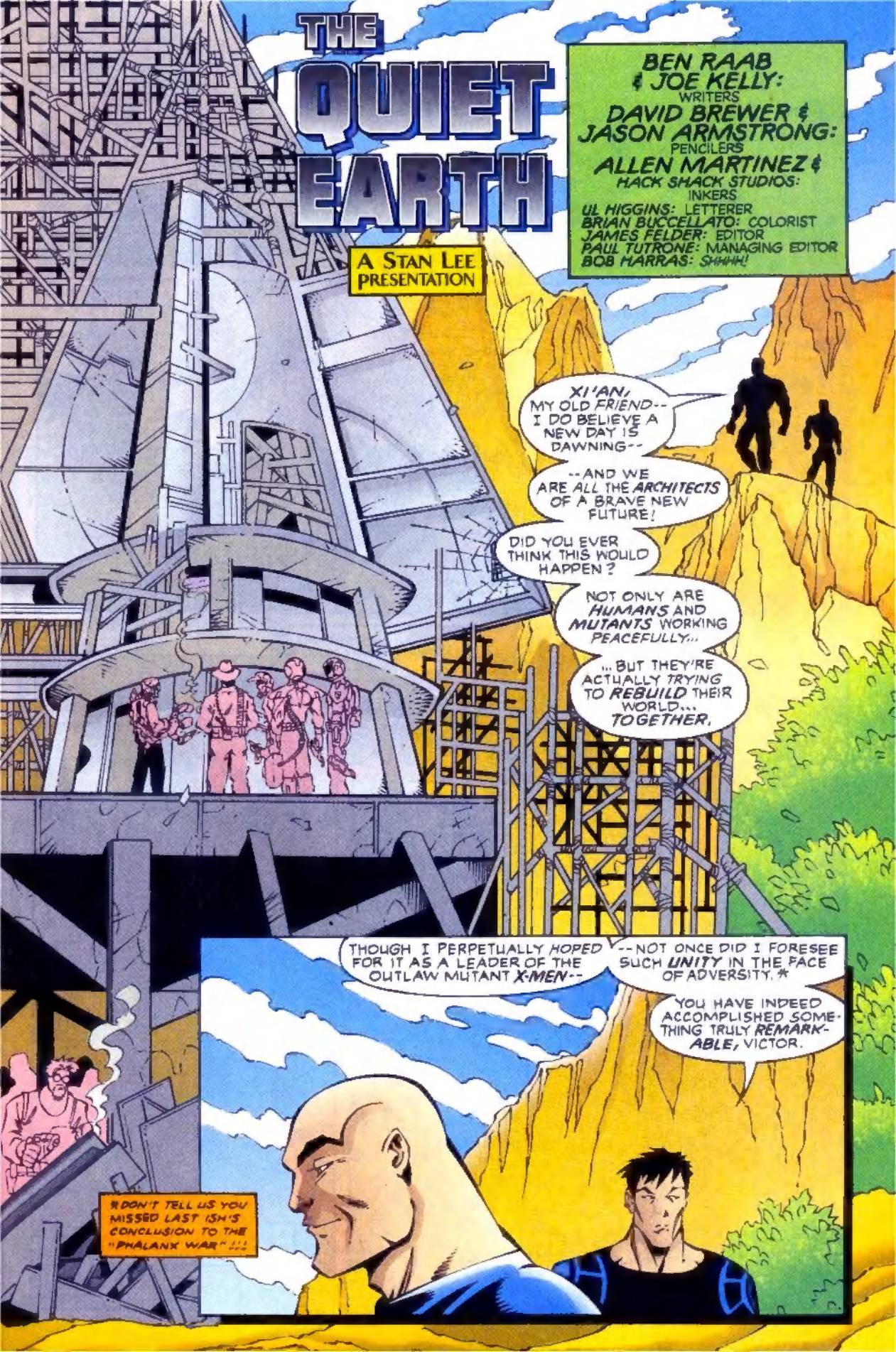
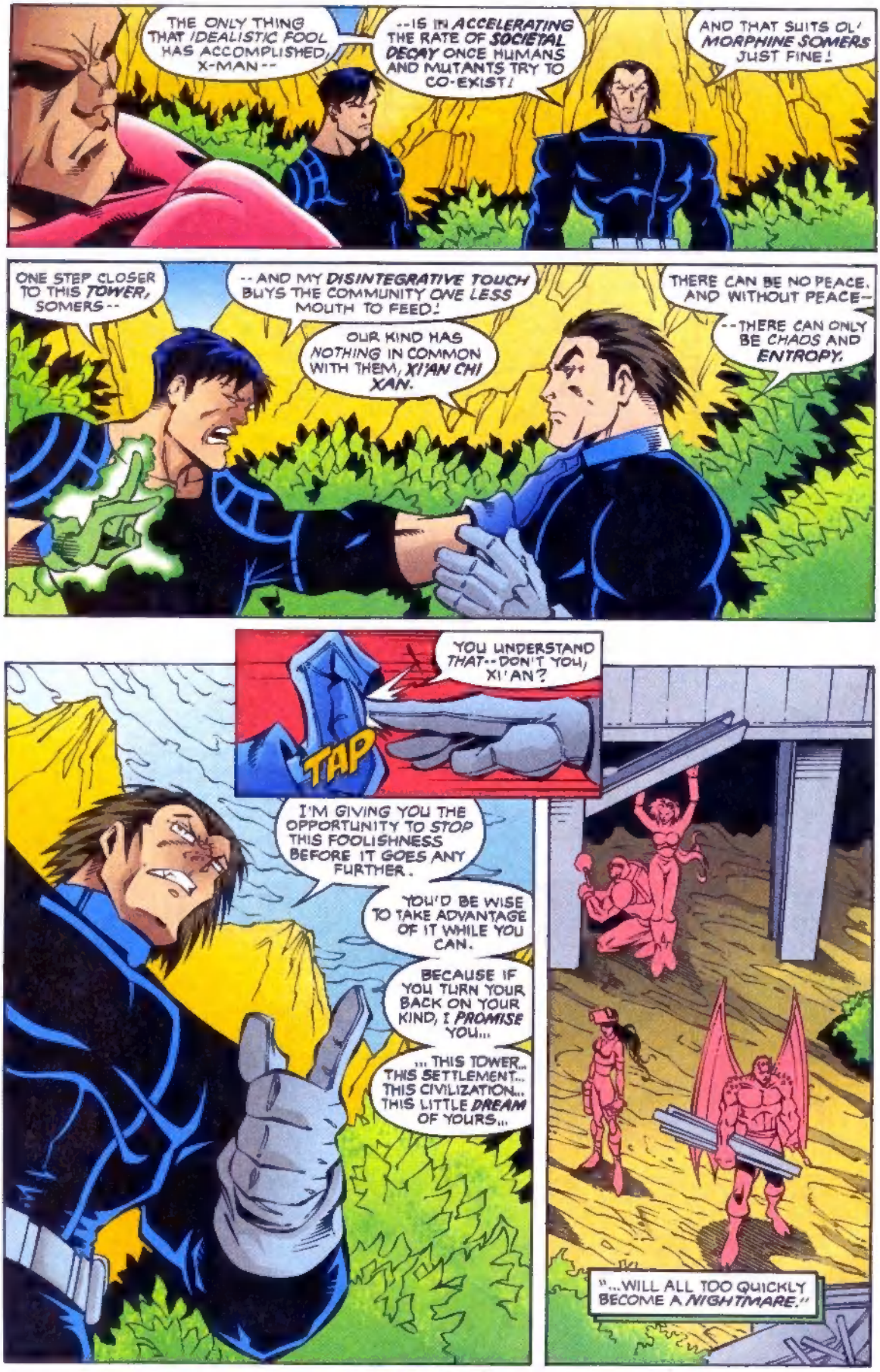

... A MAN OF VISION.

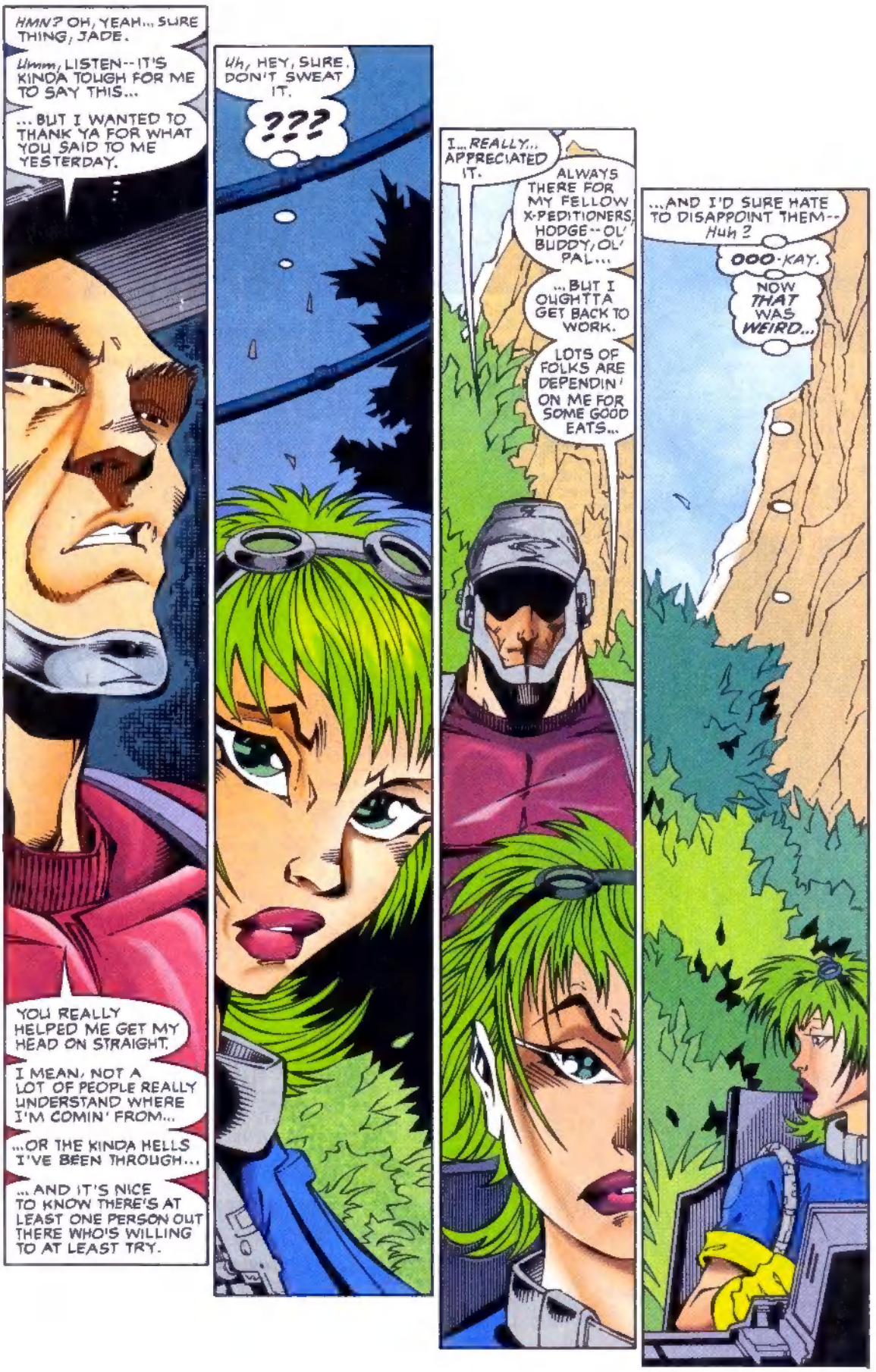

THE QUIET EARTH
A STAN LEE PRESENTATION
BEN RAAB & JOE KELLY: WRITERS
DAVID BREWER & JASON ARMSTRONG: PENCILERS
ALLEN MARTINEZ & HACK SHACK STUDIOS: INKERS
UL HIGGINS: LETTERER
BRIAN BUCCELLATO: COLORIST
JAMES FELDER: EDITOR
PAUL TUTRONE: MANAGING EDITOR
BOB HARRAS: SHHHH!
XI'AN, MY OLD FRIEND-- I DO BELIEVE A NEW DAY IS DAWNING--
--AND WE ARE ALL THE ARCHITECTS OF A BRAVE NEW FUTURE!
DID YOU EVER THINK THIS WOULD HAPPEN?
NOT ONLY ARE HUMANS AND MUTANTS WORKING PEACEFULLY...
...BUT THEY'RE ACTUALLY TRYING TO REBUILD THEIR WORLD... TOGETHER.
THOUGH I PERPETUALLY HOPED FOR IT AS A LEADER OF THE OUTLAW MUTANT X-MEN--
--NOT ONCE DID I FORESEE SUCH UNITY IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY.*
YOU HAVE INDEED ACCOMPLISHED SOMETHING TRULY REMARKABLE, VICTOR.
*DON'T TELL US YOU MISSED LAST ISH'S CONCLUSION TO THE "PHALANX WAR"!!!

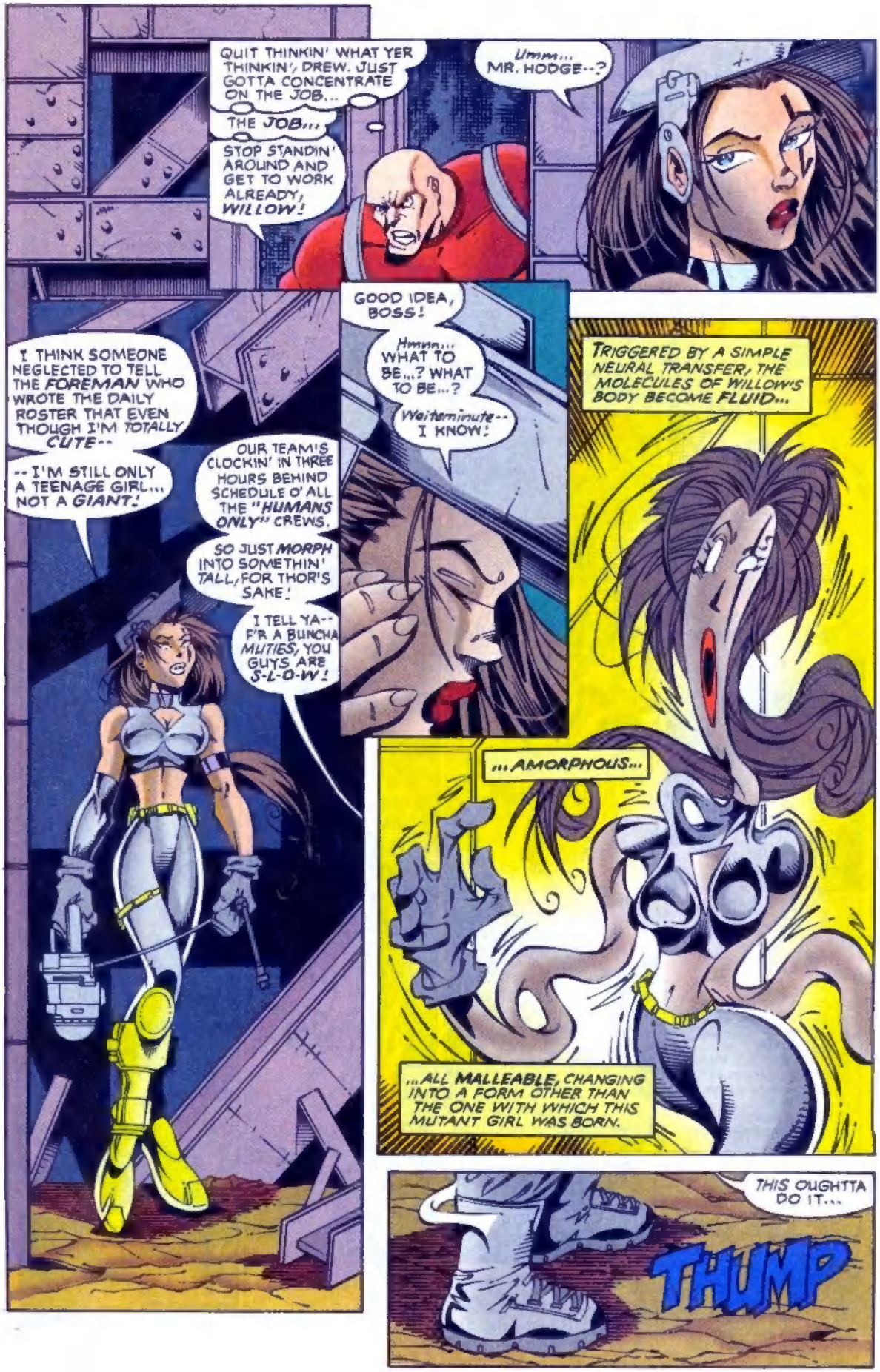

THE ONLY THING THAT IDEALISTIC FOOL HAS ACCOMPLISHED, X-MAN--
--IS IN ACCELERATING THE RATE OF SOCIETAL DECAY ONCE HUMANS AND MUTANTS TRY TO CO-EXIST!
AND THAT SUITS OL' MORPHINE SOMERS JUST FINE!
ONE STEP CLOSER TO THIS TOWER, SOMERS--
--AND MY DISINTEGRATIVE TOUCH BUYS THE COMMUNITY ONE LESS MOUTH TO FEED!
OUR KIND HAS NOTHING IN COMMON WITH THEM, XI'AN CHI XAN.
THERE CAN BE NO PEACE. AND WITHOUT PEACE--
--THERE CAN ONLY BE CHAOS AND ENTROPY.
YOU UNDERSTAND THAT--DON'T YOU, XI'AN?
TAP
I'M GIVING YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO STOP THIS FOOLISHNESS BEFORE IT GOES ANY FURTHER.
YOU'D BE WISE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT WHILE YOU CAN.
BECAUSE IF YOU TURN YOUR BACK ON YOUR KIND, I PROMISE YOU...
... THIS TOWER... THIS SETTLEMENT... THIS CIVILIZATION... THIS LITTLE DREAM OF YOURS...
"...WILL ALL TOO QUICKLY BECOME A NIGHTMARE."

THE WOMAN HOISTING THE FIVE TON STEEL GIRDER IS LA LUNATICA.
SHE'S A MUTANT.
THE MAN WITH THE MAGNA-DRILL IS COMMANDER DREW HODGE.
HE'S HUMAN.
THOUGH BOTH ARE MEMBERS OF THE SAVAGE LAND'S X-PEDITIONERS...
... THEY NEVER REALLY GOT ALONG.
WHY?
BECAUSE SHE'S A MUTANT... AND HE'S HUMAN.
BUT THAT WAS THEN-- AND THIS IS NOW...
WOULDJA HURRY IT UP... HODGE?
SUDDENLY I AIN'T FEELIN' SO... HOT.
...ISN'T IT?
THE GIRDER--
IT'S SLIPPING!
JUST HOLD IT STEADY LIKE THAT ANOTHER SEC, LUNA--
HODGE!!! LOOK OUT!!!
Huh...?

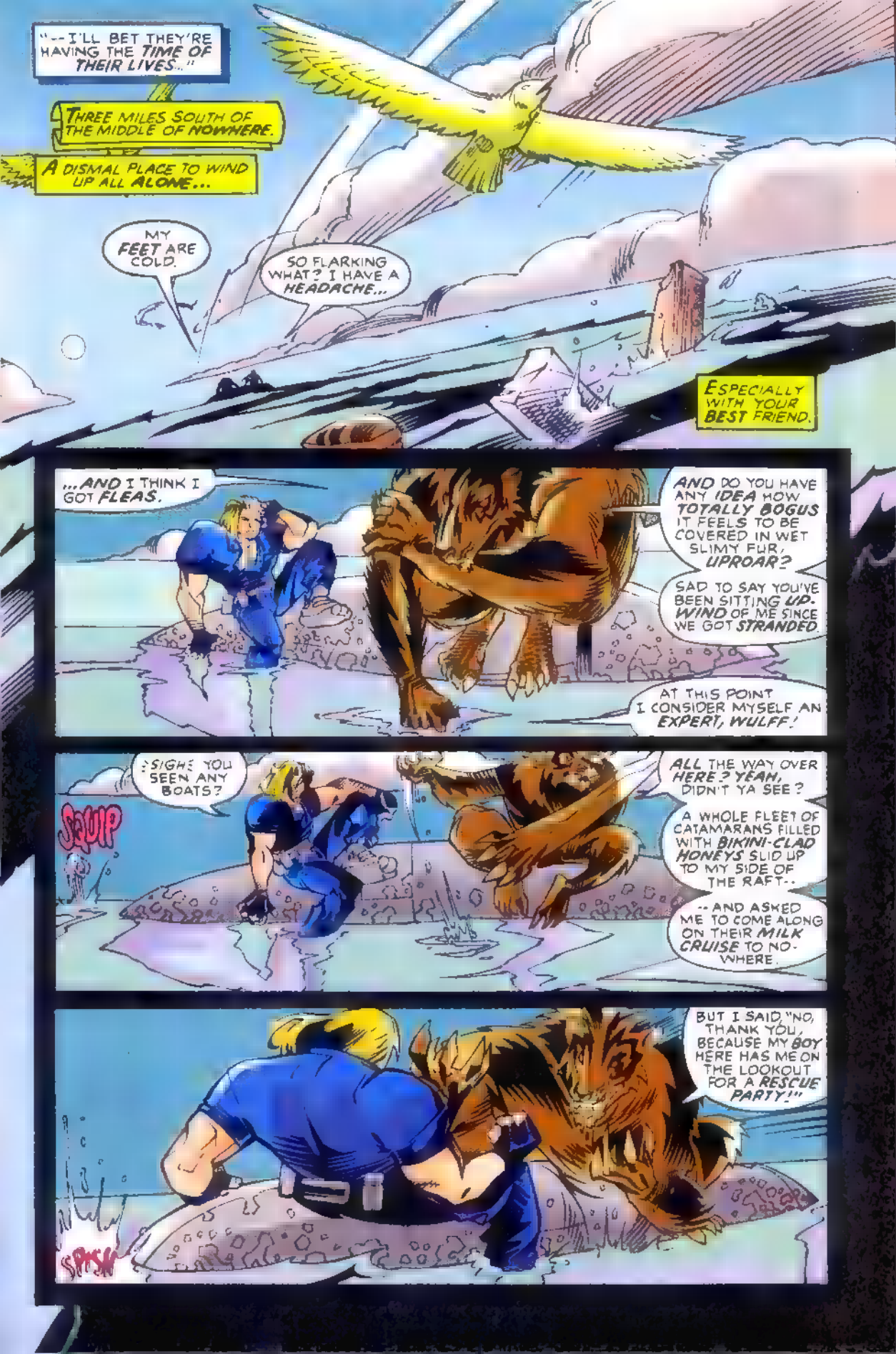
THOOM
HOLY &%$#@! SHOCK!
... HODGE SWIFTLY AVOIDS CERTAIN DEATH.
THOUGH JUST BARELY.
JEEZ, LUNA! YA TRYIN' TA KILL ME, OR SOMETHIN', GIRL?
MOVING WITH A SPEED THAT BELIES HIS MUCH-PROCLAIMED LACK OF GENETIC MUTATION OR ENHANCEMENT...
SORRY, BOSS. I -- I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME...
...JUST FELT SO WEAK ALL OF A SUDDEN.
THEN GET YER BUTT OVER TO THE DOC-IN-A-BOX-- STAT!
WE'RE RESPONSIBLE F'R SETTIN' UP THE SETTLEMENT'S FIRST OFFICIAL LIVING COMPLEX--
--AND THE LAST THING I WANNA WORRY ABOUT IS A SICK WORKER!
SHOCKIN' TEAM'S FALLIN' BEHIND...
I THOUGHT I HAD SUPPRESSED IT, BUT I CAN FEEL IT AGAIN.
THE HUNGER-- IT'S BACK...
YEARNING TO TASTE THE FEARS OF THE WEAK AGAIN, Eh, LUNA?
Hmmm... IF XI'AN CANNOT BE "TURNED"--
--THEN PERHAPS YOU CAN!

WITH AN UNCANNY KNACK FOR FIXING ALL THINGS TECHNOLOGICAL...
...LOVELY JADE RYUTEKI IS THE X-PEDITIONERS' "DIGITAL DIVA".
TEK TEK TEK
THIS SHOULD TAKE CARE OF THE LIGHTING/CLIMATE CONTROL...
...AND IF THE BIO-NEURAL CO-PROCESSOR I CREATED ACTUALLY WORKS--FOOD REPLICATION!
NOBODY'LL EVER HAVE TO GO HUNGRY.
GO, JADE! GO, JADE!
TEK TEK TEK
TEK TEK TEK TE--
JADE...?
AIIEEE!
SHOCKIN' A, HODGE--YA SCARED THE BEJEEZIES OUTTA ME!
LOOK, I KNOW YOU WERE ONCE A HYPER-MARINE AN' ALL--
--BUT WOULDJA PLEASE STOP USIN' THAT "SHADOW OPS" TRAINING TO SNEAK UP ON ME?
YA KNOW HOW ENGROSSED I GET IN MY WORK ONCE I START JAMMIN'

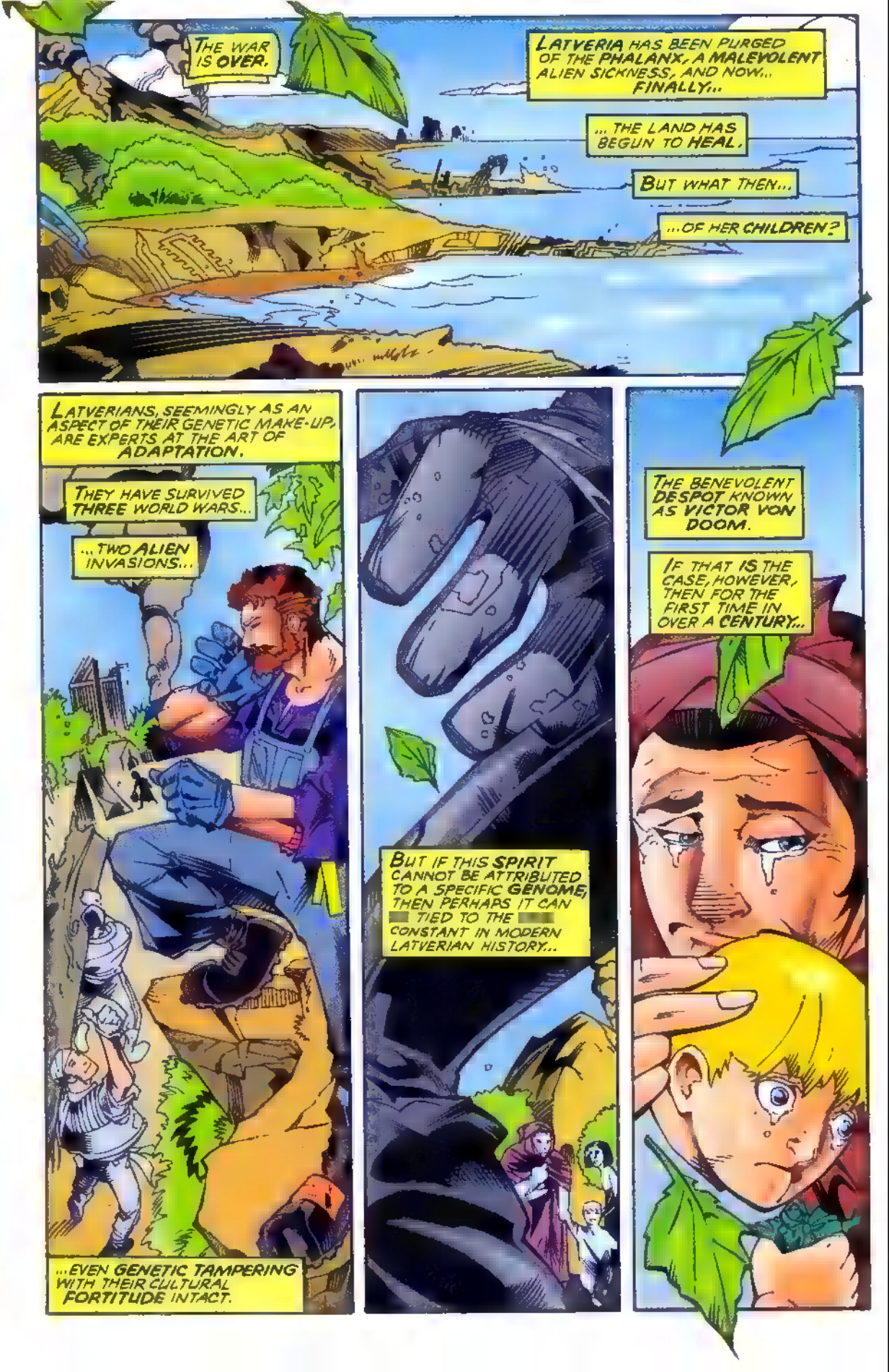

HMN? OH, YEAH... SURE THING, JADE.
Umm, LISTEN--IT'S KINDA TOUGH FOR ME TO SAY THIS...
... BUT I WANTED TO THANK YA FOR WHAT YOU SAID TO ME YESTERDAY.
YOU REALLY HELPED ME GET MY HEAD ON STRAIGHT.
I MEAN, NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE REALLY UNDERSTAND WHERE I'M COMIN' FROM...
...OR THE KINDA HELLS I'VE BEEN THROUGH...
... AND IT'S NICE TO KNOW THERE'S AT LEAST ONE PERSON OUT THERE WHO'S WILLING TO AT LEAST TRY.
Uh, HEY, SURE. DON'T SWEAT IT.
???
I... REALLY... APPRECIATED IT.
ALWAYS THERE FOR MY FELLOW X-PEDITIONERS, HODGE--OL' BUDDY, OL' PAL...
...BUT I OUGHTTA GET BACK TO WORK.
LOTS OF FOLKS ARE DEPENDIN' ON ME FOR SOME GOOD EATS...
...AND I'D SURE HATE TO DISAPPOINT THEM-- Huh?
OOO-KAY.
NOW THAT WAS WEIRD...

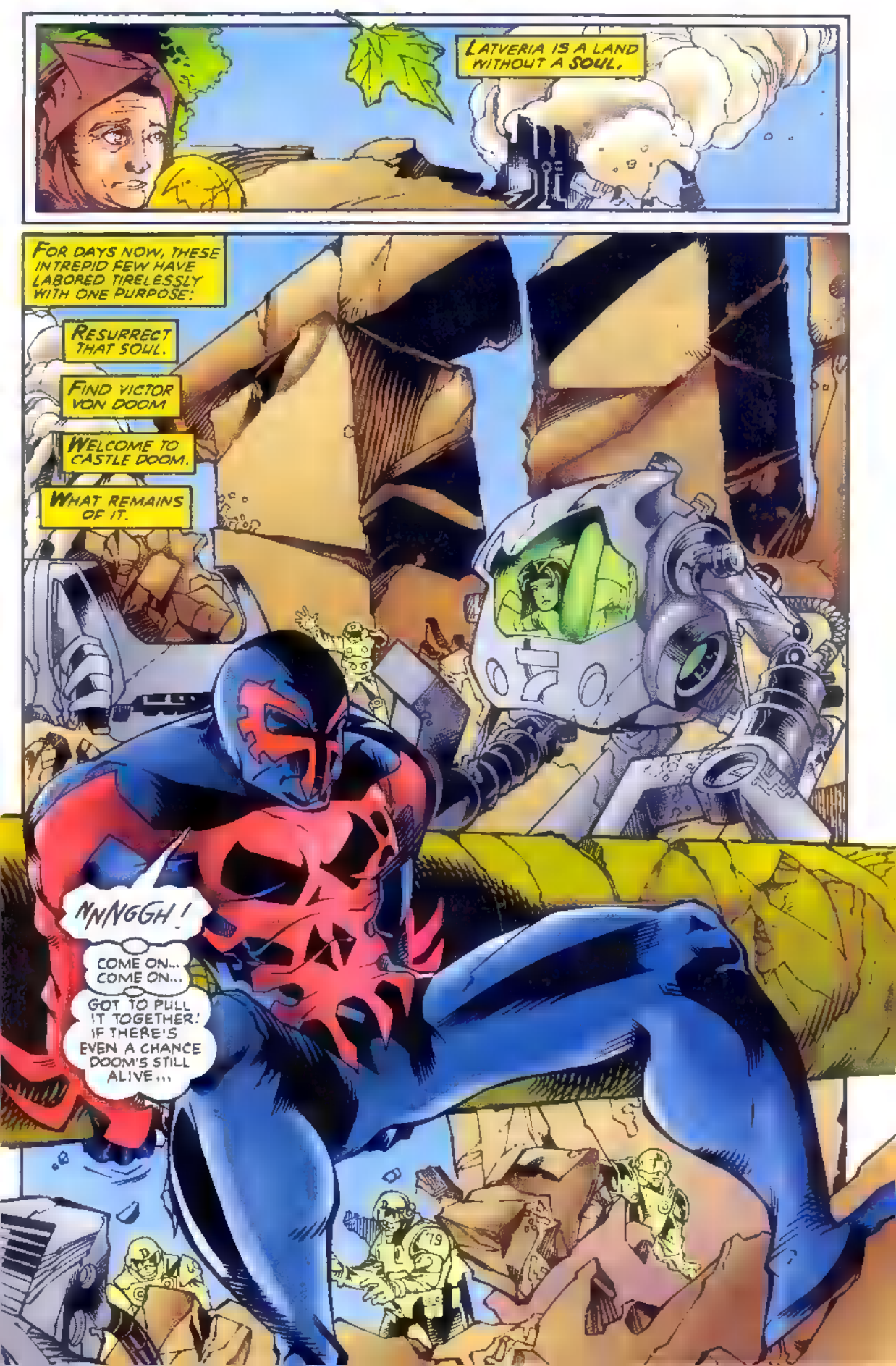

QUIT THINKIN' WHAT YER THINKIN', DREW. JUST GOTTA CONCENTRATE ON THE JOB...
THE JOB...
STOP STANDIN' AROUND AND GET TO WORK ALREADY, WILLOW!
Umm... MR. HODGE--?
GOOD IDEA, BOSS!
Hmmm... WHAT TO BE...? WHAT TO BE...?
Waitaminute-- I KNOW!
I THINK SOMEONE NEGLECTED TO TELL THE FOREMAN WHO WROTE THE DAILY ROSTER THAT EVEN THOUGH I'M TOTALLY CUTE--
-- I'M STILL ONLY A TEENAGE GIRL... NOT A GIANT!
OUR TEAM'S CLOCKIN' IN THREE HOURS BEHIND SCHEDULE O' ALL THE "HUMANS ONLY" CREWS.
SO JUST MORPH INTO SOMETHIN' TALL, FOR THOR'S SAKE!
I TELL YA-- F'R A BUNCHA MUTIES, YOU GUYS ARE S-L-O-W!
TRIGGERED BY A SIMPLE NEURAL TRANSFER, THE MOLECULES OF WILLOW'S BODY BECOME FLUID...
...AMORPHOUS...
...ALL MALLEABLE, CHANGING INTO A FORM OTHER THAN THE ONE WITH WHICH THIS MUTANT GIRL WAS BORN.
THIS OUGHTTA DO IT...
THUMP

HEY, BLOODHAWK! CHECK ME OUT!
I'M MY OL' X-NATION BUDDY-- UPROAR!
YOUR HANDS ARE TOO BIG!
YOU'VE CERTAINLY SOLVED THE "SIZE" PART OF YOUR DILEMMA, WILLOW--
--BUT HOW ARE YOU GOING TO USE THE WELDING TOOLS NOW?
Y'KNOW, IT FEELS LIKE IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE ANY OF US HEARD FROM UPROAR AND WULFF.
I WONDER HOW THEY'RE DOING?
KNOWIN' THOSE TWO FREAKAZOIDS--

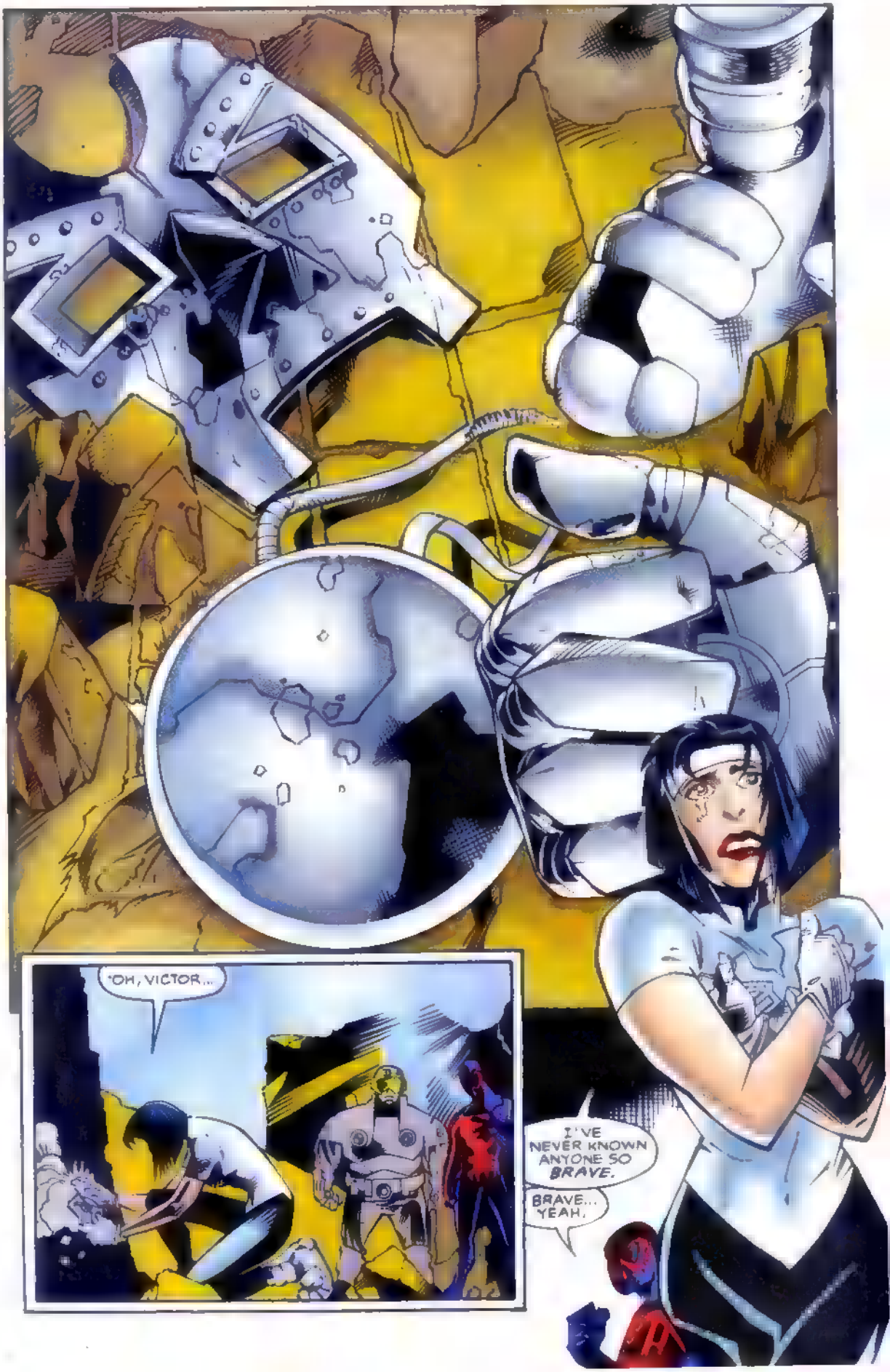

"--I'LL BET THEY'RE HAVING THE TIME OF THEIR LIVES..."
THREE MILES SOUTH OF THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.
A DISMAL PLACE TO WIND UP ALL ALONE...
MY FEET ARE COLD.
SO FLARKING WHAT? I HAVE A HEADACHE...
ESPECIALLY WITH YOUR BEST FRIEND.
...AND I THINK I GOT FLEAS.
AND DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW TOTALLY BOGUS IT FEELS TO BE COVERED IN WET SLIMY FUR, UPROAR?
SAD TO SAY YOU'VE BEEN SITTING UP-WIND OF ME SINCE WE GOT STRANDED.
AT THIS POINT I CONSIDER MYSELF AN EXPERT, WULFF!
:SIGH: YOU SEEN ANY BOATS?
SQUIP
ALL THE WAY OVER HERE? YEAH, DIDN'T YA SEE?
A WHOLE FLEET OF CATAMARANS FILLED WITH BIKINI-CLAD HONEYS SLID UP TO MY SIDE OF THE RAFT--
-- AND ASKED ME TO COME ALONG ON THEIR MILK CRUISE TO NO-WHERE.
BUT I SAID "NO, THANK YOU, BECAUSE MY BOY HERE HAS ME ON THE LOOKOUT FOR A RESCUE PARTY!"
SPASH

BLOW IT OUT YOUR SQUEAKY-BONE, DOG-BOY.
SHOVE IT, SCUZ-MONGER.
SQUIP
Y'KNOW WHAT?
WE'RE DEAD.


THE WAR IS OVER.
LATVERIA HAS BEEN PURGED OF THE PHALANX, A MALEVOLENT ALIEN SICKNESS, AND NOW... FINALLY...
... THE LAND HAS BEGUN TO HEAL.
BUT WHAT THEN...
...OF HER CHILDREN?
LATVERIANS, SEEMINGLY AS AN ASPECT OF THEIR GENETIC MAKE-UP, ARE EXPERTS AT THE ART OF ADAPTATION.
THEY HAVE SURVIVED THREE WORLD WARS...
...TWO ALIEN INVASIONS...
...EVEN GENETIC TAMPERING WITH THEIR CULTURAL FORTITUDE INTACT.
BUT IF THIS SPIRIT CANNOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO A SPECIFIC GENOME, THEN PERHAPS IT CAN [redacted] TIED TO THE [redacted] CONSTANT IN MODERN LATVERIAN HISTORY...
THE BENEVOLENT DESPOT KNOWN AS VICTOR VON DOOM.
IF THAT IS THE CASE, HOWEVER, THEN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OVER A CENTURY...

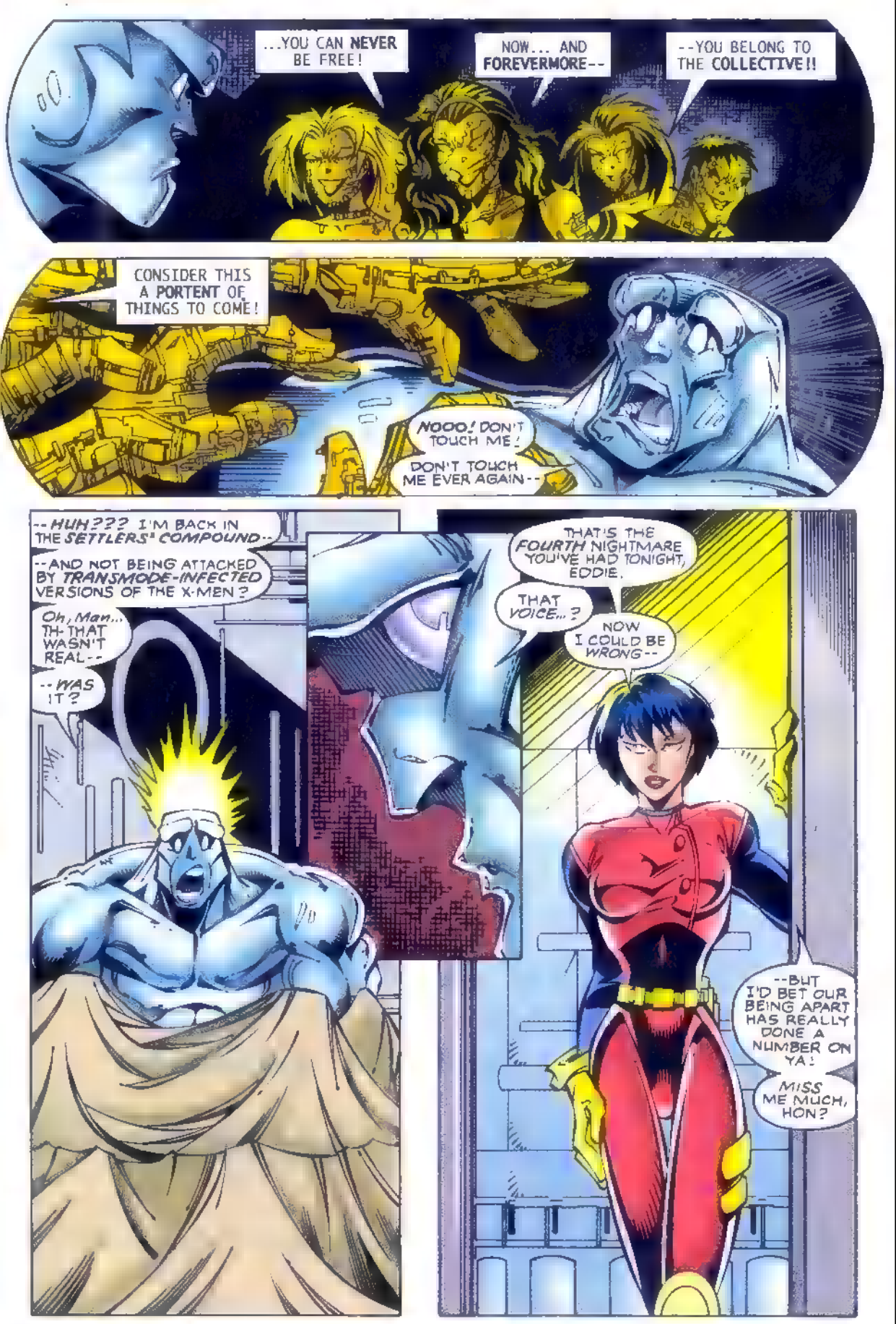

LATVERIA IS A LAND WITHOUT A SOUL.
FOR DAYS NOW, THESE INTREPID FEW HAVE LABORED TIRELESSLY WITH ONE PURPOSE:
RESURRECT THAT SOUL.
FIND VICTOR VON DOOM
WELCOME TO CASTLE DOOM.
WHAT REMAINS OF IT.
NNNGGH!
COME ON... COME ON...
GOT TO PULL IT TOGETHER! IF THERE'S EVEN A CHANCE DOOM'S STILL ALIVE...

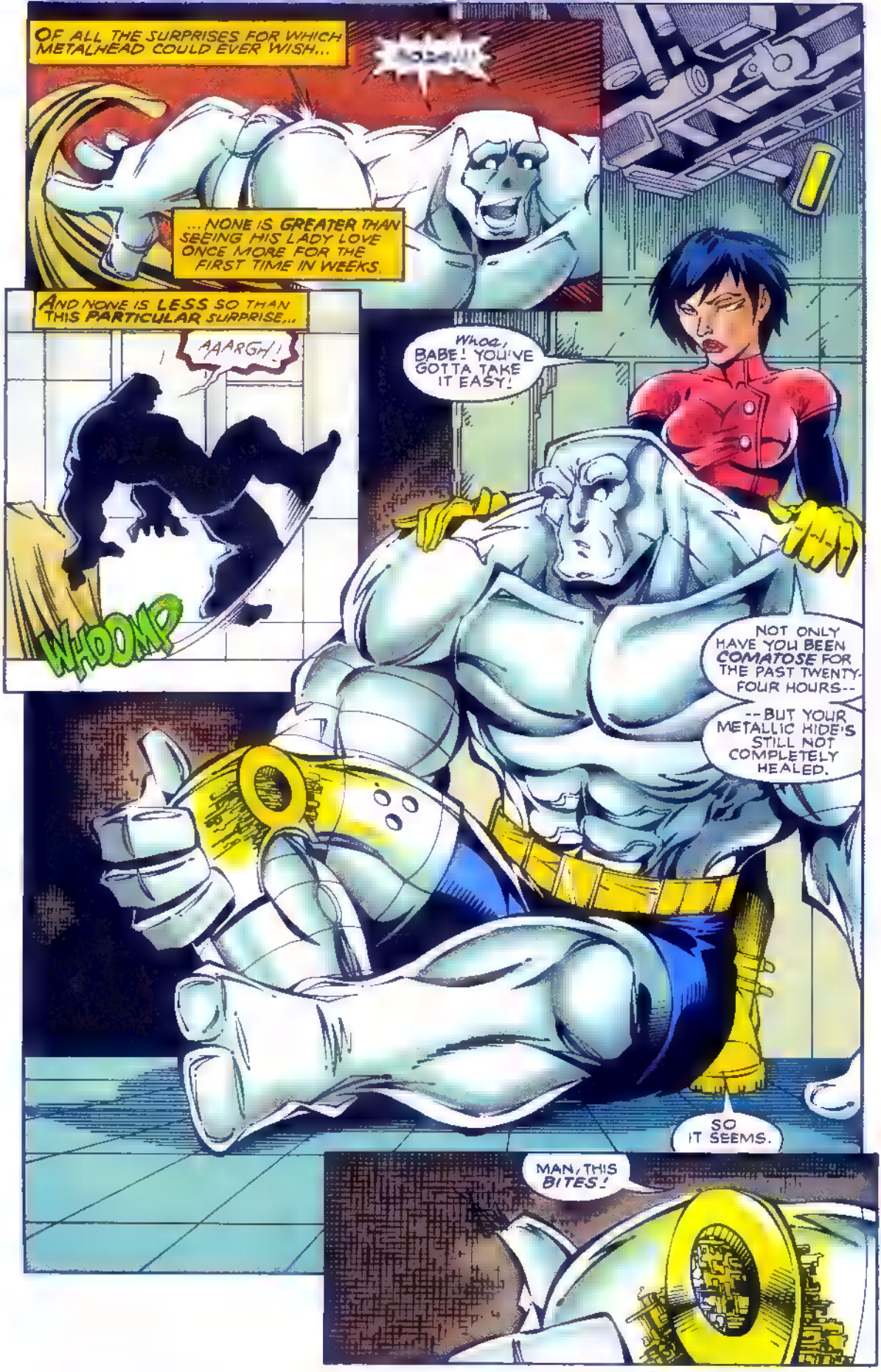
FOR ALL THE EVIL HE'S DONE IN HIS LIFETIME... AT THE END OF THE DAY, HE HAD WHAT IT TOOK TO SAVE THE WORLD...
TO STOP THE PHALANX ONCE AND FOR ALL...
TO BE A HERO.
UNLIKE SOME OF US...
IT'S MOVING!
EXIT STONE COLUMN... STAGE RIGHT!
THEN THERE'S XINA. SHE'S BARELY SPOKEN A WORD SINCE THAT DAY... SINCE THE EXPLOSION.
I WONDER JUST HOW DEEP HER FEELINGS FOR DOOM RUN.
NICE HEAVE, XINA. [redacted] WORKING OUT?
ALL RIGHT, PEOPLE, LET'S GET IN THERE.
LOOK!
OH...


"OH, VICTOR...
I'VE NEVER KNOWN ANYONE SO BRAVE.
BRAVE... YEAH.

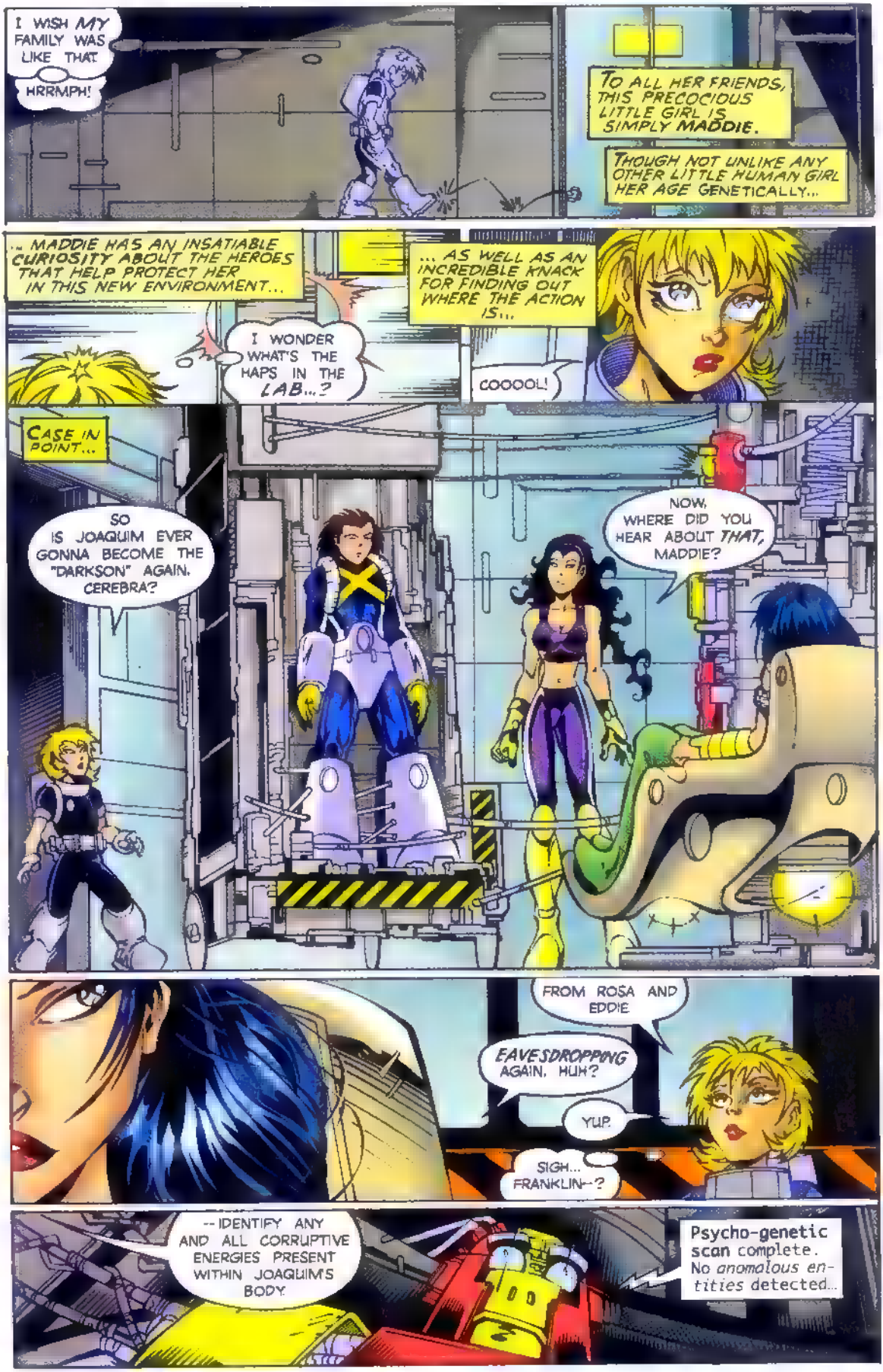
MISS... PLEASE... I HAVE TO ASK YOU TO GIVE THAT TO ME NOW. I HAVE ORDERS.
ORDERS ?
IT'S OKAY, XINA... I'M HERE.
WHAT IS IT? SOME SORT OF BURIAL CEREMONY?
NO... FAR FROM IT. OUR SOVEREIGN LEFT STRICT INSTRUCTIONS IN THE EVENT OF HIS DEATH.
[redacted] TO TAKE ANY REMAINS TO A SPECIFIC LOCATION IN LATVERIA, AND AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.
INSTRUCTIONS? WHAT'RE YOU PLANNING? A SEANCE?
MIGUEL! THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR JOKES!
[redacted] DIED FOR US ALL! GET AWAY FROM ME!
Um... SIR, THIS IS MUCH MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAN CEREMONY. THIS IS THE FUTURE OF LATVERIA. YOU ARE TO JOIN US...
... AND PLEASE BRING THE BOY... NOSTROMO.

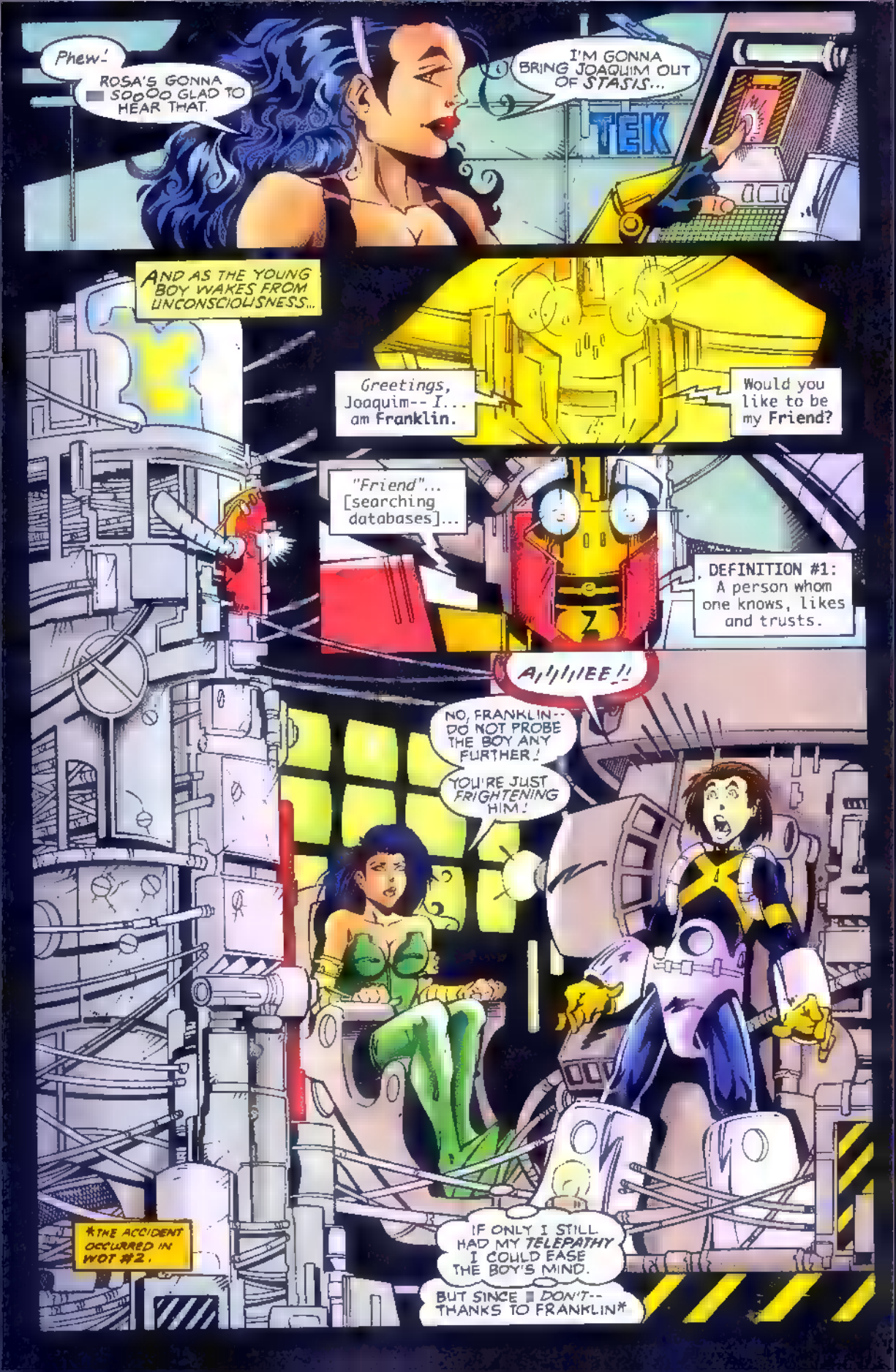
BACK AT THE LAST REFUGE...
A-ARE YOU GONNA BE OKAY, METALHEAD?
I --ACK!-- DUNNO, KRYSTALIN. WHATEVER THAT-- ARRR!-- ALIEN DID TO ME!*
NOT ONLY DOES IT HURT LIKE SHOCK--
BUT I THINK IT'S PERMANENT!
*EDDIE WAS INFECTED BY THE PHALANX'S TRANSMODE VIRUS LAST ISSUE.
POOR EDDIE-- I'VE [redacted] SEEN THE BIG GUY SO DEPRESSED!
VID THIS--THAT TECHNO-ORGANIC STUFF'S [redacted] KIND OF METALLIC ALLOY, RIGHT?
SO WHY DON'T YOU JUST USE YOUR FERROMORPHIC POWERS TO SYNTHESIZE THE VIRUS AND PURGE YOUR SYSTEM?
IT'S [redacted] LONG SHOT-- BUT IT'S THE ONLY ONE I'VE GOT!
HERE-- UHHNFF! --GOES!
AND AS EDWARD VAN BEETHOVEN STIMULATES HIS MUTANT TALENT TO ASSUME THE PHYSICAL PROPERTY OF ANY METAL HE TOUCHES --
--A POWER HE HAS RARELY MADE GOOD USE OF SINCE TRAGICALLY LOSING HIS ABILITY TO RETURN TO HIS FLESH AND BLOOD FORM...**
... HE DISCOVERS THAT MAYBE -- JUST MAYBE THE LOSS HE ONCE CONSIDERED SUCH A PERSONAL CURSE...
...WAS REALLY A BLESSING IN DISGUISE.
I DID IT! I'M FREE!
**X-MEN 2099 #7.
DON'T BE SILLY, EDDIE...
WHO--??

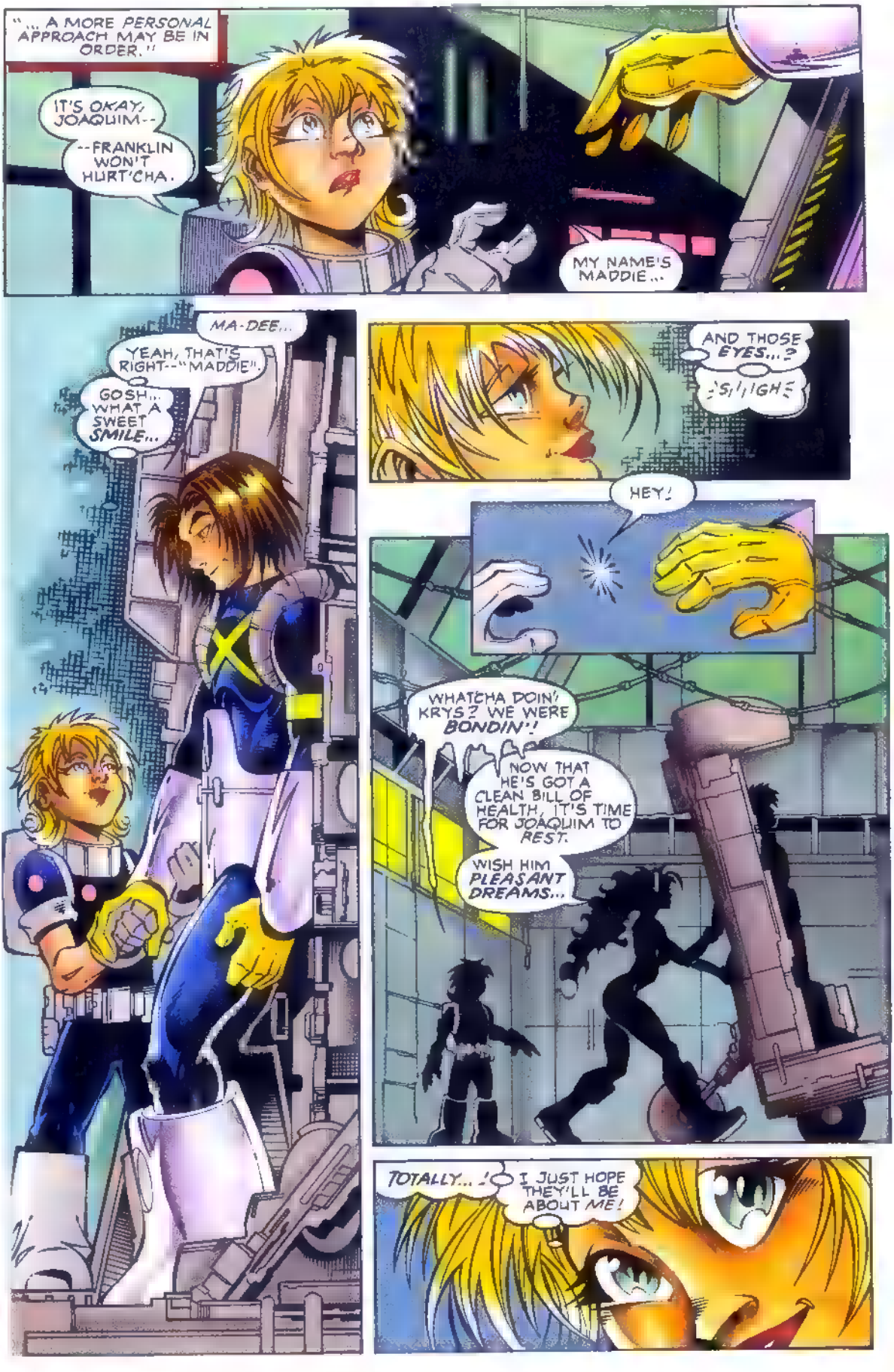

...YOU CAN NEVER BE FREE!
NOW... AND FOREVERMORE--
--YOU BELONG TO THE COLLECTIVE!!
CONSIDER THIS A PORTENT OF THINGS TO COME!
NOOO! DON'T TOUCH ME!
DON'T TOUCH ME EVER AGAIN--
--HUH??? I'M BACK IN THE SETTLERS' COMPOUND--
--AND NOT BEING ATTACKED BY TRANSMODE-INFECTED VERSIONS OF THE X-MEN?
Oh, Man... TH-THAT WASN'T REAL--
--WAS IT?
THAT'S THE FOURTH NIGHTMARE YOU'VE HAD TONIGHT, EDDIE.
THAT VOICE...?
NOW I COULD BE WRONG--
--BUT I'D BET OUR BEING APART HAS REALLY DONE A NUMBER ON YA!
MISS ME MUCH, HON?


OF ALL THE SURPRISES FOR WHICH METALHEAD COULD EVER WISH...
...NONE IS GREATER THAN SEEING HIS LADY LOVE ONCE MORE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN WEEKS.
AND NONE IS LESS SO THAN THIS PARTICULAR SURPRISE...
AAARGH!
WHOOMP
Whoa, BABE! YOU'VE GOTTA TAKE IT EASY!
NOT ONLY HAVE YOU BEEN COMATOSE FOR THE PAST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS--
--BUT YOUR METALLIC HIDE'S STILL NOT COMPLETELY HEALED.
SO IT SEEMS.
MAN, THIS BITES!

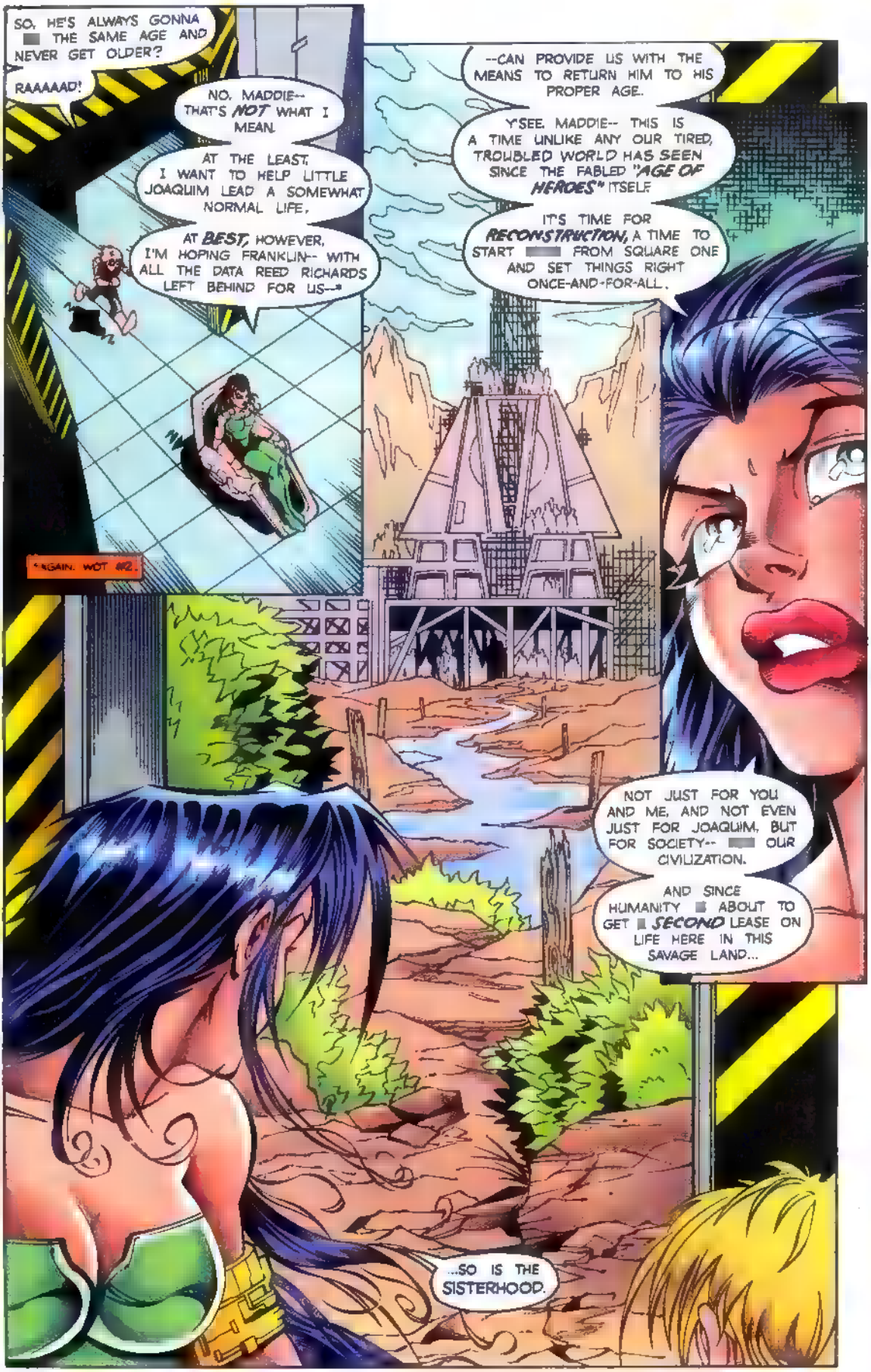
ROSA-- BABE..
I'M SO SORRY I HAVEN'T BEEN AROUND FOR YOU LATELY.
I KNOW THINGS HAVE BEEN TOUGH FOR YOU SINCE YOUR BABY WAS TRANSFORMED INTO THE "DARKSON"--
--BUT WHEN THE WORLD FLOODED AND WE GOT SEPARATED PEOPLE NEEDED HELP HERE.
SHHH-- IT'S OKAY, EDDIE. YOU DID THE RIGHT THING.
CEREBRA AND KRYSTALIN HAVE BEEN RUNNING TESTS ON JOAQUIM SINCE LAST NIGHT--
--AND THEY SAY HE'S GONNA BE JUST FINE.
AS FOR ME--?
HEY, JUST BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE METAL SKIN AND A SUNSHINE SMILE LIKE YOURS--
--DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T TAKE CARE OF MYSELF NOW, DOES IT?
'COURSE NOT, BABE. YOU KNOW I LOVE YOU, RIGHT?
HMNN... YEAH-- I THINK I KNOW THAT...
EDDIE AND ROSA LOOK SO HAPPY TO BE TOGETHER AGAIN.
KINDA LIKE A REGULAR MOMMY AND DADDY
KINDA LIKE... A FAMILY.


I WISH MY FAMILY WAS LIKE THAT
HRRMPH!
TO ALL HER FRIENDS, THIS PRECOCIOUS LITTLE GIRL IS SIMPLY MADDIE.
THOUGH NOT UNLIKE ANY OTHER LITTLE HUMAN GIRL HER AGE GENETICALLY...
... MADDIE HAS AN INSATIABLE CURIOSITY ABOUT THE HEROES THAT HELP PROTECT HER IN THIS NEW ENVIRONMENT...
... AS WELL AS AN INCREDIBLE KNACK FOR FINDING OUT WHERE THE ACTION IS...
I WONDER WHAT'S THE HAPS IN THE LAB...?
COOOOL!
CASE IN POINT...
SO IS JOAQUIM EVER GONNA BECOME THE "DARKSON" AGAIN, CEREBRA?
NOW, WHERE DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THAT, MADDIE?
FROM ROSA AND EDDIE
EAVESDROPPING AGAIN, HUH?
YUP.
SIGH... FRANKLIN--?
--IDENTIFY ANY AND ALL CORRUPTIVE ENERGIES PRESENT WITHIN JOAQUIM'S BODY.
Psycho-genetic scan complete. No anomalous entities detected...


Phew-!
ROSA'S GONNA SOOOO GLAD TO HEAR THAT.
I'M GONNA BRING JOAQUIM OUT OF STASIS...
TEK
AND AS THE YOUNG BOY WAKES FROM UNCONSCIOUSNESS...
Greetings, Joaquim-- I... am Franklin.
Would you like to be my Friend?
"Friend"... [searching databases]...
DEFINITION #1: A person whom one knows, likes and trusts.
A!!!!EE!!
NO, FRANKLIN-- DO NOT PROBE THE BOY ANY FURTHER!
YOU'RE JUST FRIGHTENING HIM!
*THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED IN WOT #2.
IF ONLY I STILL HAD MY TELEPATHY I COULD EASE THE BOY'S MIND.
BUT SINCE I DON'T-- THANKS TO FRANKLIN*

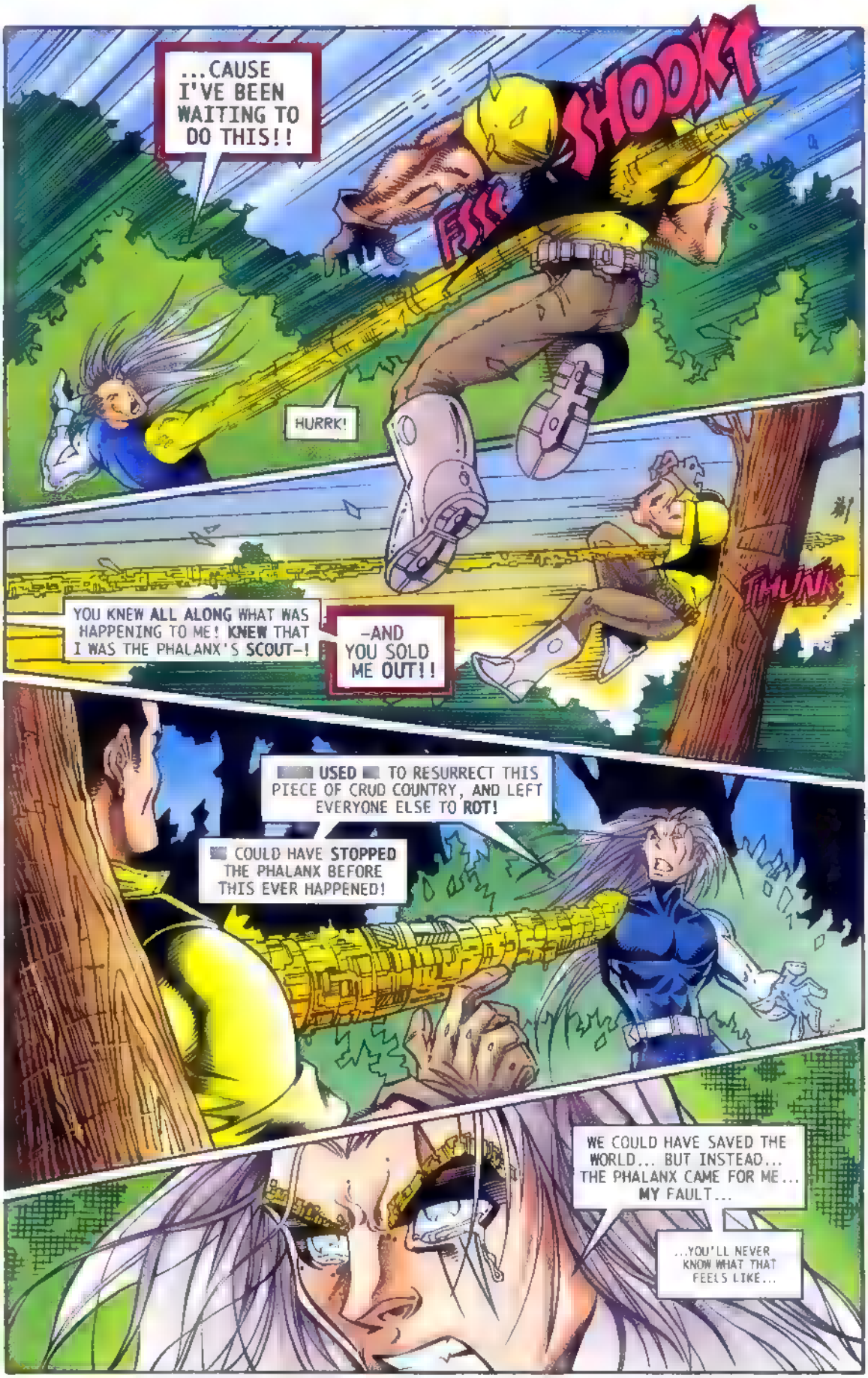

"... A MORE PERSONAL APPROACH MAY BE IN ORDER."
IT'S OKAY, JOAQUIM--
--FRANKLIN WON'T HURT'CHA.
MY NAME'S MADDIE...
MA-DEE...
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT--"MADDIE".
GOSH... WHAT A SWEET SMILE...
AND THOSE EYES...?
SIGH
HEY!
WHATCHA DOIN', KRYS? WE WERE BONDIN'!
NOW THAT HE'S GOT A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH, IT'S TIME FOR JOAQUIM TO REST.
WISH HIM PLEASANT DREAMS...
TOTALLY...!
I JUST HOPE THEY'LL BE ABOUT ME!

HE IS SOOOO DREAMY!
SHAKTI, WHAT HAPPENED TO JOAQUIM?
WHAT MADE HIM THE "DARKSON"?
IT'S A TERRIBLE STORY, MADDIE--
--ONE THAT SHOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED TO SO DELICATE A CHILD...
"THOUGH THEY HADN'T CONCEIVED HIM TOGETHER, EDDIE AND ROSA WERE THE PERFECT COUPLE TO RAISE SUCH A RADIANT LITTLE BOY.
"THEY WERE SUCH A HAPPY COUPLE, AND IT WAS CERTAIN THAT JOAQUIM'S LIFE WOULD BE ONE FULL OF LOVE AND TENDERNESS.
"BUT THAT WAS BEFORE VULCANN--THE FLESH-SHAPING BLOODSMITH...
...ABDUCTED THE POOR CHILD AND STOLE HIS YOUTH BY TWISTING HIM INTO THE [redacted] WHO WOULD USHER IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF MUTANTKIND...
"...THE PREMATURELY-ADOLESCENT DARKSON"!
"AND THOUGH WE X-MEN FOUGHT HARD TO SAVE JOAQUIM, ULTIMATELY DEFEATING VULCANN..."
...THE DAMAGE HAD BEEN DONE TO THE BABY.
HE'S TRAPPED IN THE BODY OF A TEENAGER--
--AND THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT...
...YET.


SO, HE'S ALWAYS GONNA ■ THE SAME AGE AND NEVER GET OLDER?
RAAAAAD!
NO, MADDIE-- THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN.
AT THE LEAST, I WANT TO HELP LITTLE JOAQUIM LEAD A SOMEWHAT NORMAL LIFE.
AT BEST, HOWEVER, I'M HOPING FRANKLIN-- WITH ALL THE DATA REED RICHARDS LEFT BEHIND FOR US--"
--CAN PROVIDE US WITH THE MEANS TO RETURN HIM TO HIS PROPER AGE.
Y'SEE, MADDIE-- THIS IS A TIME UNLIKE ANY OUR TIRED, TROUBLED WORLD HAS SEEN SINCE THE FABLED "AGE OF HEROES" ITSELF.
IT'S TIME FOR RECONSTRUCTION, A TIME TO START ■■■ FROM SQUARE ONE AND SET THINGS RIGHT ONCE-AND-FOR-ALL.
"AGAIN: WOT #2.
NOT JUST FOR YOU AND ME, AND NOT EVEN JUST FOR JOAQUIM, BUT FOR SOCIETY-- ■■■ OUR CIVILIZATION.
AND SINCE HUMANITY ■ ABOUT TO GET ■ SECOND LEASE ON LIFE HERE IN THIS SAVAGE LAND...
...SO IS THE SISTERHOOD.

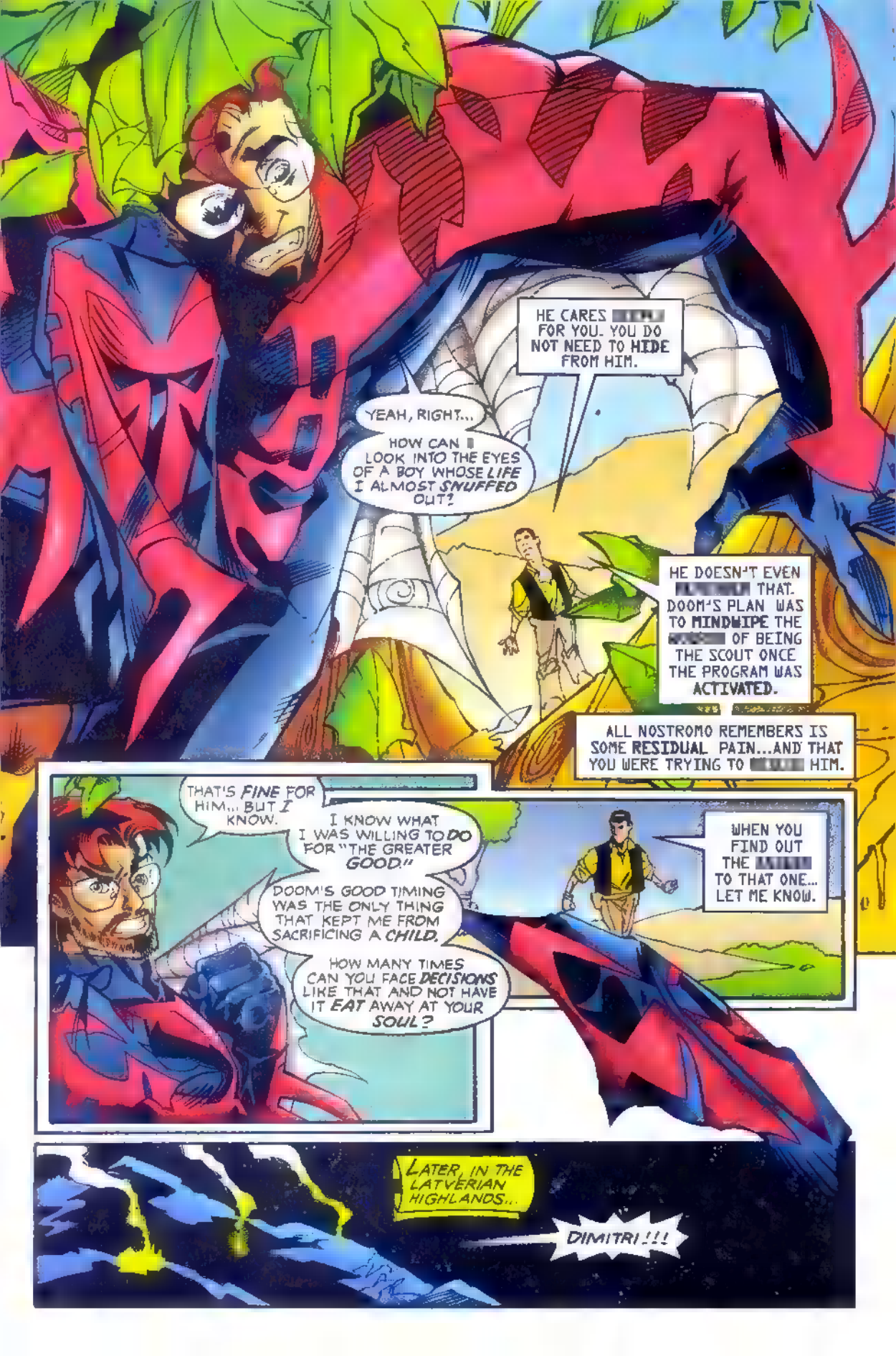
MAN, I'M HUNGRY...
WE NEED TO GO THIS WAY. NOW.
Skritch Skratch
NAH, GEE. HOME IS AWAY FROM THE SUN
HOW THE SHOCK DO YOU KNOW THAT?
I HAVE A NEWFOUND SENSE OF DIRECTION. GET OVER IT.
YOU WANT TO LIVE... TRUST MY INSTINCTS.
THEY MAY NOT MAKE FOR GOOD TABLE MANNERS... BUT THEY'RE ALWAYS ON THE MONEY.
WHAT THE-- WULFF?
HE'S FLIPPED OUT. TOTALLY LOST IT.
EVER SINCE THE VULTURE PUSHED HIM TO SLIDE ON THE ANIMAL SIDE HE'S--
BLOOD? WULFF!!

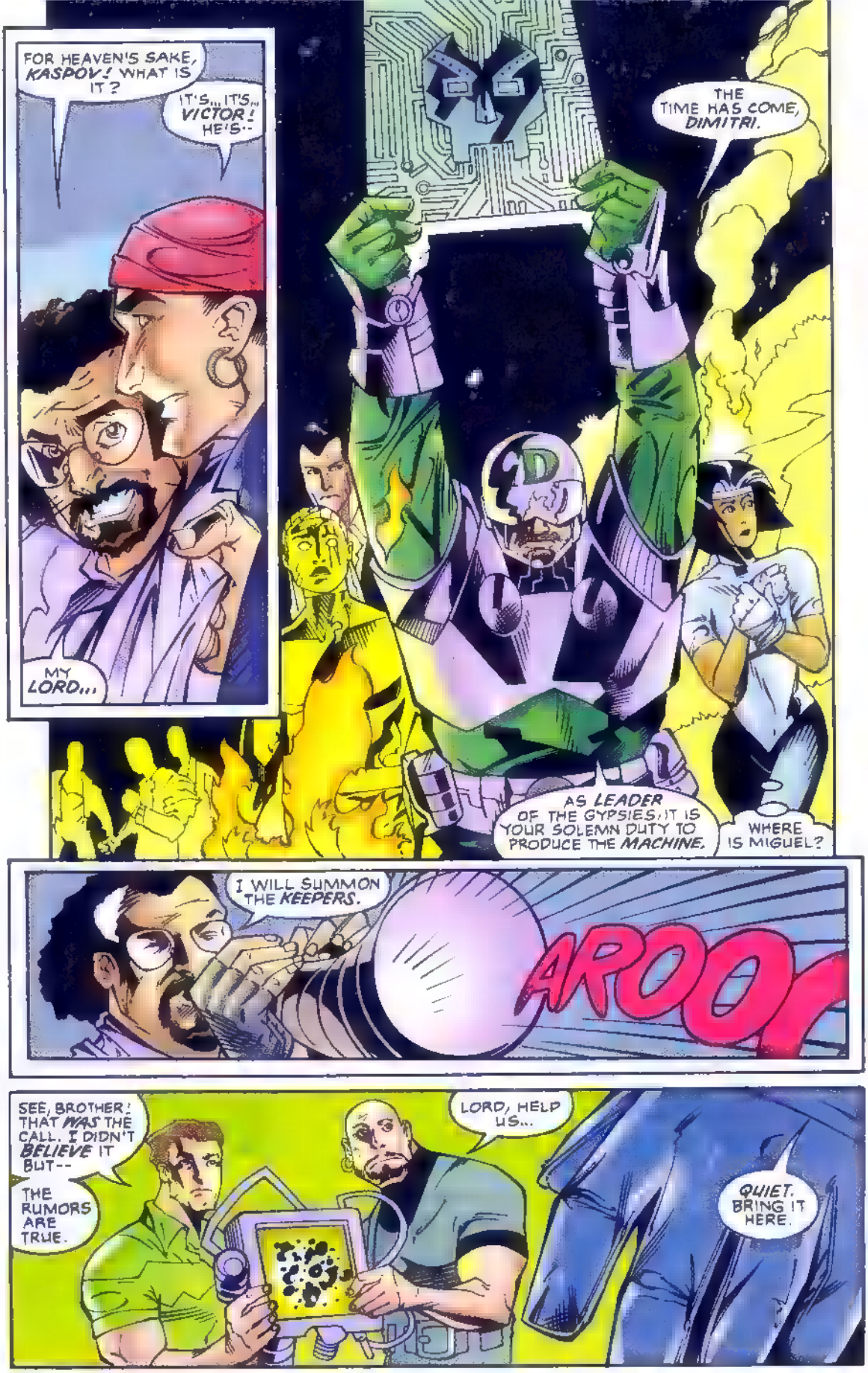
IN THE SHADOW OF CASTLE DOOM...
SYNTHESIZING A NEW PARADIGM FOR LIFE ON THIS TROUBLED EARTH.
THE CHIRPING OF BIRDS BOUNCES AGAINST THE METALLIC BARK OF TECHNO-ORGANICIZED TREES...
...THE NATURAL AND THE UNNATURAL HARMONIZING.
EVOLUTION.
WHAT HAVE I BECOME?
NO LONGER HUMAN... NOR MUTANT...
...BUT DEFINITELY NOT PHALANX.
WHAT DID DOOM DO TO ME-?
HEY.
LOOKING GOOD, NOSTROMO. ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.
I WAS WONDERING WHEN YOU WERE GOING TO SHOW YOUR FACE AGAIN, WINN...

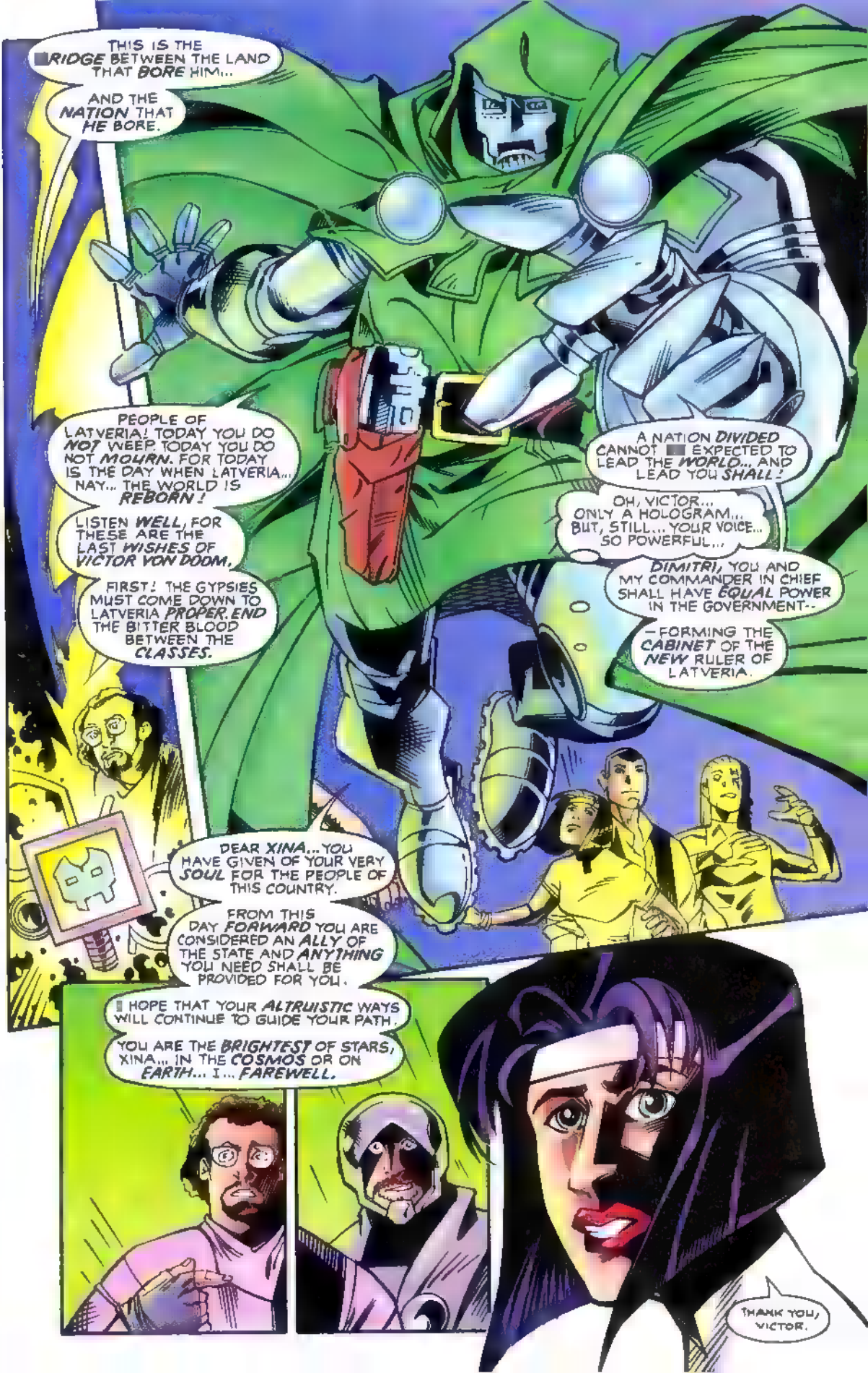

...CAUSE I'VE BEEN WAITING TO DO THIS!!
FSSS
SHOOK!
HURRK!
THUNK
YOU KNEW ALL ALONG WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO ME! KNEW THAT I WAS THE PHALANX'S SCOUT-!
-AND YOU SOLD ME OUT!!
USED TO RESURRECT THIS PIECE OF CRUD COUNTRY, AND LEFT EVERYONE ELSE TO ROT!
COULD HAVE STOPPED THE PHALANX BEFORE THIS EVER HAPPENED!
WE COULD HAVE SAVED THE WORLD... BUT INSTEAD... THE PHALANX CAME FOR ME... MY FAULT...
...YOU'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT THAT FEELS LIKE...

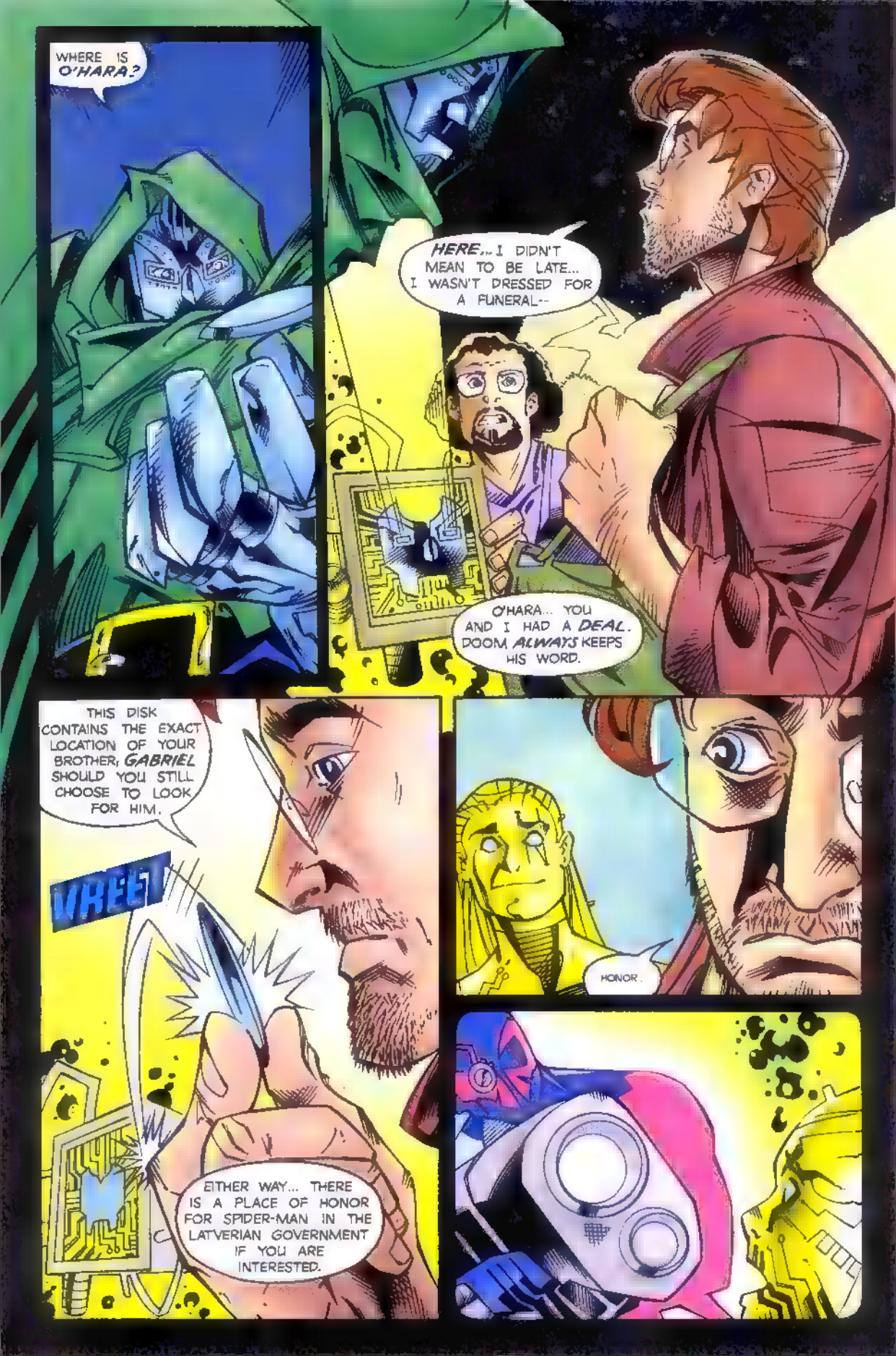
I THINK I DO.
YOU WEREN'T [illegible] OF YOUR PART [illegible] THE PHALANX INVASION...
...I WAS A WILLING PARTICI-PANT...
...I KNOW VERY WELL.
BUT WE COULD [illegible] HAVE STOPPED THE INVASION BEFORE IT REACHED EARTH. WE COULDN'T HAVE SAVED ANY MORE PEOPLE THAN WE ALREADY DID...
[illegible] NONE OF THIS WAS YOUR FAULT.
EVERYONE WHO IS ALIVE TODAY IS ALIVE BECAUSE OF YOU.
YOU [illegible]AN BECAUSE OF DOOM.
DOOM, WHO MANIPULATED ME... USED ME. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN TOLD-
NO. IF YOU HAD BEEN- WE NEVER COULD HAVE SLIPPED THEM THE SHUT-DOWN CODES. YOU [illegible] WOULD HAVE GONE ALONG WITH THE PLAN.
EXACTLY.
AND WE ALL WOULD HAVE BEEN ASSIMILATED.
BEST WE COULD DO WAS TO KEEP YOU IN THE DARK AND PROTECT YOU UNTIL IT WAS ALL OVER.
YOUR BEST WAS PRETTY LAME.
NOSTROMO... WITH ALL MY HEART, I'M SORRY THAT YOU HAD TO GO THROUGH THIS... BUT WE MUST MOVE ON. THERE'S MUCH TO DO—
WINN!

ARE YOU AND THE BOY READY, SIR ?
YES, WE ARE.
READY FOR WHAT? WHAT'S GOING ON?
DIDN'T SPIDER-MAN SUMMON YOU ? HE WAS ASKED TO BRING YOU ALONG--
SPIDEY? NO, HAVEN'T SEEN HIM. WHERE IS HE SUPPOSED TO BRING ME TO?
THE GATHERING, OF COURSE.
THE WHAT?
I ASSURE YOU, SON, THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.
YOU MUST COME. FOLLOW ME, PLEASE.
I GUESS IF SPIDEY'S GOING TO BE THERE, I SHOULD GO...
I WOULDN'T MIND BEING AROUND SOMEONE I TRUST FOR A CHANGE.
I'LL BE ALONG IN A MINUTE.
ASK ME IF I CARE, WINN...
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL HIM YOU WERE HERE?
I...I DON'T KNOW.


HE CARES [redacted] FOR YOU. YOU DO NOT NEED TO HIDE FROM HIM.
YEAH, RIGHT...
HOW CAN I LOOK INTO THE EYES OF A BOY WHOSE LIFE I ALMOST SNUFFED OUT?
HE DOESN'T EVEN [redacted] THAT. DOOM'S PLAN WAS TO MINDWIPE THE [redacted] OF BEING THE SCOUT ONCE THE PROGRAM WAS ACTIVATED.
ALL NOSTROMO REMEMBERS IS SOME RESIDUAL PAIN...AND THAT YOU WERE TRYING TO [redacted] HIM.
THAT'S FINE FOR HIM... BUT I KNOW.
I KNOW WHAT I WAS WILLING TO DO FOR "THE GREATER GOOD."
DOOM'S GOOD TIMING WAS THE ONLY THING THAT KEPT ME FROM SACRIFICING A CHILD.
HOW MANY TIMES CAN YOU FACE DECISIONS LIKE THAT AND NOT HAVE IT EAT AWAY AT YOUR SOUL?
WHEN YOU FIND OUT THE [redacted] TO THAT ONE... LET ME KNOW.
LATER, IN THE LATVERIAN HIGHLANDS...
DIMITRI!!!

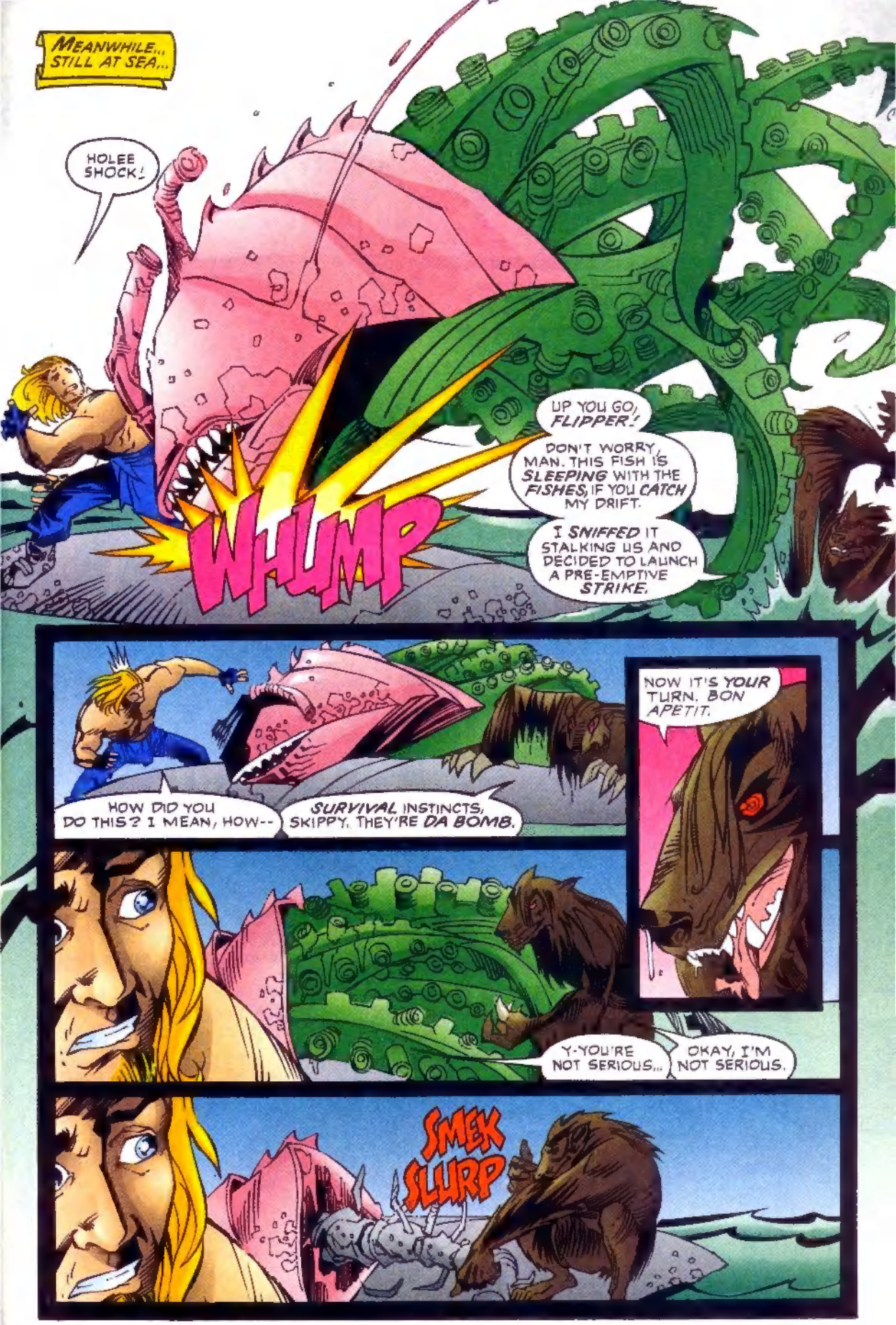

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, KASPOV! WHAT IS IT?
IT'S... IT'S... VICTOR! HE'S--
MY LORD...
THE TIME HAS COME, DIMITRI.
AS LEADER OF THE GYPSIES, IT IS YOUR SOLEMN DUTY TO PRODUCE THE MACHINE.
WHERE IS MIGUEL?
I WILL SUMMON THE KEEPERS.
AROO
SEE, BROTHER! THAT WAS THE CALL. I DIDN'T BELIEVE IT BUT--
THE RUMORS ARE TRUE.
LORD, HELP US...
QUIET. BRING IT HERE.


THIS IS THE ■RIDGE BETWEEN THE LAND THAT BORE HIM...
AND THE NATION THAT HE BORE.
PEOPLE OF LATVERIA! TODAY YOU DO NOT WEEP. TODAY YOU DO NOT MOURN. FOR TODAY IS THE DAY WHEN LATVERIA... NAY... THE WORLD IS REBORN!
LISTEN WELL, FOR THESE ARE THE LAST WISHES OF VICTOR VON DOOM.
FIRST! THE GYPSIES MUST COME DOWN TO LATVERIA PROPER. END THE BITTER BLOOD BETWEEN THE CLASSES.
A NATION DIVIDED CANNOT ■ EXPECTED TO LEAD THE WORLD... AND LEAD YOU SHALL!
OH, VICTOR... ONLY A HOLOGRAM... BUT, STILL... YOUR VOICE... SO POWERFUL...
DIMITRI, YOU AND MY COMMANDER IN CHIEF SHALL HAVE EQUAL POWER IN THE GOVERNMENT--
--FORMING THE CABINET OF THE NEW RULER OF LATVERIA.
DEAR XINA... YOU HAVE GIVEN OF YOUR VERY SOUL FOR THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY.
FROM THIS DAY FORWARD YOU ARE CONSIDERED AN ALLY OF THE STATE AND ANYTHING YOU NEED SHALL BE PROVIDED FOR YOU.
I HOPE THAT YOUR ALTRUISTIC WAYS WILL CONTINUE TO GUIDE YOUR PATH.
YOU ARE THE BRIGHTEST OF STARS, XINA... IN THE COSMOS OR ON EARTH... I... FAREWELL.
THANK YOU, VICTOR.


WHERE IS O'HARA?
HERE... I DIDN'T MEAN TO BE LATE... I WASN'T DRESSED FOR A FUNERAL--
O'HARA... YOU AND I HAD A DEAL. DOOM ALWAYS KEEPS HIS WORD.
THIS DISK CONTAINS THE EXACT LOCATION OF YOUR BROTHER, GABRIEL SHOULD YOU STILL CHOOSE TO LOOK FOR HIM.
VREET
EITHER WAY... THERE IS A PLACE OF HONOR FOR SPIDER-MAN IN THE LATVERIAN GOVERNMENT IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.
HONOR.

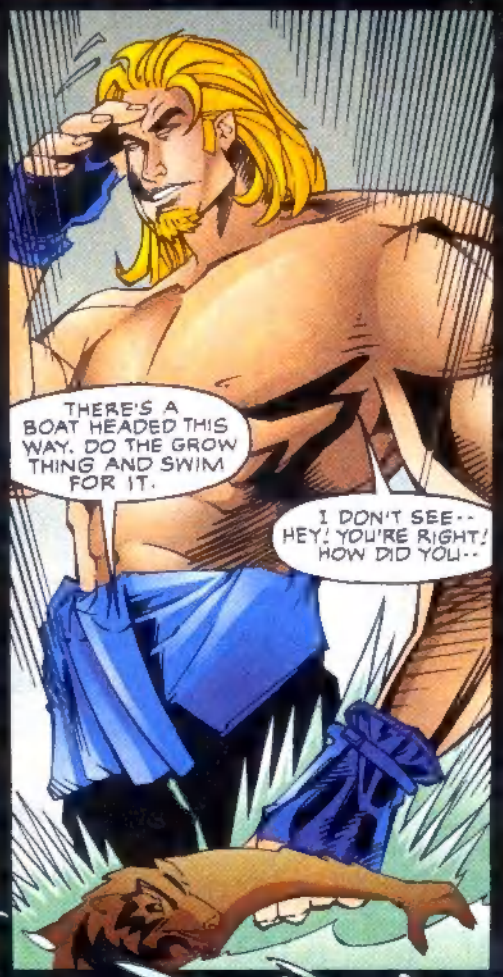
I'LL GET BACK TO YOU ON THAT, VIC, RIGHT AFTER SPIDER-MAN--
--AFTER MIGUEL HAS BROUGHT HIS BROTHER HOME.
SPIDEY? YOUR COSTUME.
MAYBE... MAYBE NOT.
KEEP AN EYE ON IT FOR ME, WILL YA, NOS?
SORRY, KID... I'LL CATCH YOU LATER.
WAIT!
NOSTROMO...
COME TO ME.

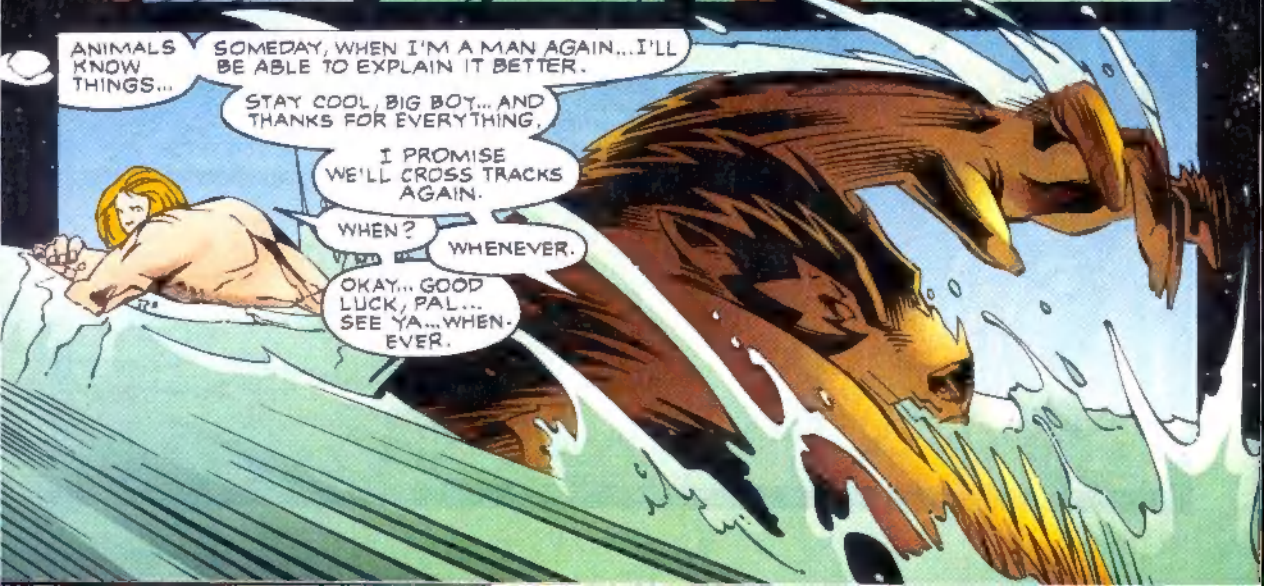
I HAVE DIRECTED YOUR BLOODLINE FOR A [redacted] YEARS.
ENCOURAGED YOUR LINEAGE, LATER YOUR EDUCATION... YOUR LIFE'S PATH.
WHILE YOU MAY BELIEVE THAT I HAVE USED YOU...
YOU ARE THE CLOSEST THING I HAVE EVER HAD TO A CHILD OF MY OWN... OR AN HEIR.
HEIR?
HEAR YOU ALL, FOR THIS IS THE FINAL WISH OF DOOM!
NOSTROMO HAS KNOWN PAIN AS DOOM HAS. HE HAS SURVIVED AS DOOM HAS...
...AND HE WILL TRIUMPH AS DOOM HAS!
FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, NOSTROMO IS THE RIGHTFUL SOVEREIGN OF LATVERIA.
[redacted] THE GUIDANCE OF MR. WINN. HE WILL LEAD YOU WELL, SUCH IS HIS DESTINY.
WHAT [redacted] YOUR ORDERS... MY LIEGE?
HE IS YOUR SAVIOR, [redacted] HIM AS I HAVE.
EMBRACE HIM... AS I [redacted] YOU, MY CHILDREN.
SO... FOR THE LAST TIME... SPEAKS VICTOR VON DOOM!
WHOA.

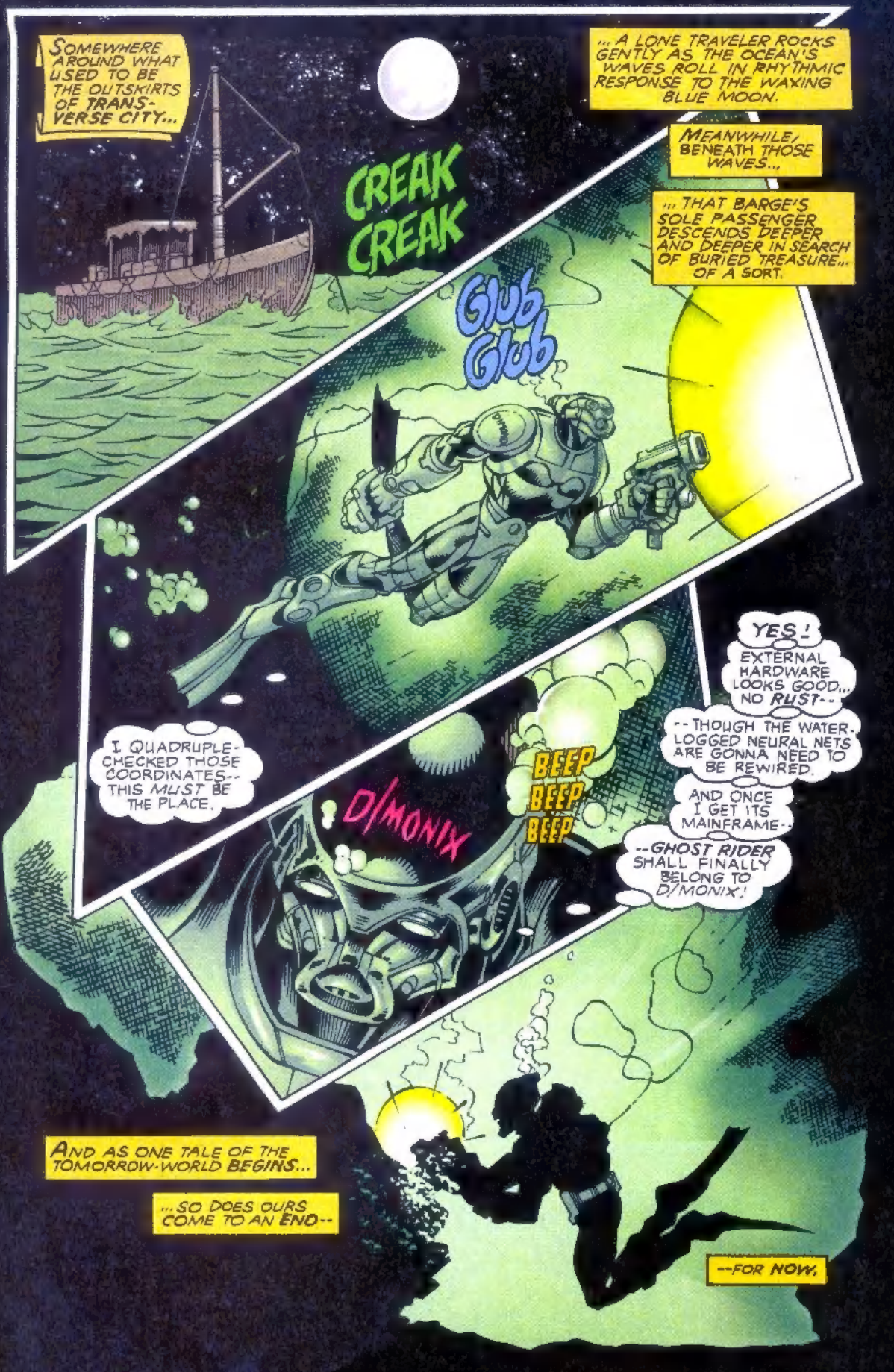

MEANWHILE... STILL AT SEA...
HOLEE SHOCK!
WHUMP
UP YOU GO, FLIPPER!
DON'T WORRY, MAN. THIS FISH IS SLEEPING WITH THE FISHES, IF YOU CATCH MY DRIFT.
I SNIFFED IT STALKING US AND DECIDED TO LAUNCH A PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE.
HOW DID YOU DO THIS? I MEAN, HOW--
SURVIVAL INSTINCTS, SKIPPY. THEY'RE DA BOMB.
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN. BON APETIT.
Y-YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS...
OKAY, I'M NOT SERIOUS.
SMEK SLURP

I DON'T THINK I KNOW YOU ANYMORE, WULFFIE...
YOU DON'T.
WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US? I MEAN... WE STILL BUDS? OR--

I THINK I'M GONNA TRY AND SWIM FOR IT. I SMELL LAND THIS WAY.
WULFF?
LOOK... UPROAR... THE WULFF YOU KNEW.. YOUR BUD... I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS RIGHT NOW.
MAYBE HE'S GONE FOR GOOD... MAYBE NOT.
BUT TO FIGURE THE WHOLE MESS OUT... I NEED TO PULL A SOLITAIRE FOR A WHILE...
OH--


THERE'S A BOAT HEADED THIS WAY. DO THE GROW THING AND SWIM FOR IT.
I DON'T SEE-- HEY! YOU'RE RIGHT! HOW DID YOU--


ANIMALS KNOW THINGS...
SOMEDAY, WHEN I'M A MAN AGAIN... I'LL BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN IT BETTER.
STAY COOL, BIG BOY... AND THANKS FOR EVERYTHING,
I PROMISE WE'LL CROSS TRACKS AGAIN.
WHEN?
WHENEVER.
OKAY... GOOD LUCK, PAL... SEE YA... WHENEVER.


SOMEWHERE AROUND WHAT USED TO BE THE OUTSKIRTS OF TRANS-VERSE CITY...
...A LONE TRAVELER ROCKS GENTLY AS THE OCEAN'S WAVES ROLL IN RHYTHMIC RESPONSE TO THE WAXING BLUE MOON.
MEANWHILE, BENEATH THOSE WAVES...
...THAT BARGE'S SOLE PASSENGER DESCENDS DEEPER AND DEEPER IN SEARCH OF BURIED TREASURE... OF A SORT.
CREAK CREAK
GLUB GLUB
I QUADRUPLE-CHECKED THOSE COORDINATES-- THIS MUST BE THE PLACE.
D/MONIX
BEEP BEEP BEEP
YES! EXTERNAL HARDWARE LOOKS GOOD... NO RUST--
--THOUGH THE WATER-LOGGED NEURAL NETS ARE GONNA NEED TO BE REWIRED.
AND ONCE I GET ITS MAINFRAME--
--GHOST RIDER SHALL FINALLY BELONG TO D/MONIX!
AND AS ONE TALE OF THE TOMORROW-WORLD BEGINS...
...SO DOES OURS COME TO AN END--
--FOR NOW.

2099
WORLD OF TOMORROW

Well, folks, unfortunately 2099: WORLD OF TOMORROW is ending with this issue. It was kind of a sudden development, so we apologize for not giving much warning. At any rate, the editorial and creative team would like to *thank all of our loyal readers* for your support these past eight issues.

Fear not, though, because the 2099-verse is far from extinct! Keep an eye out for a 2099: WORLD OF TOMORROW project sometime this summer. And if the demand is there, you can be sure to see even more of the World of Tomorrow in the future (er, no pun intended, really).

And now, the illustrious writers of 2099: WORLD OF TOMORROW would like to say good-bye personally. Thanks again, folks! It's been a blast!

Paul Tutrone
Assistant Editor

And so, for better or worse, the future has come to an end...

When we started this book, it was to a hail of on-line criticism and scorn, some of which started even before the first issue was published! To be quite honest, we could have cared less. We were just happy to have a steady job in the medium we love so much. We were excited about the prospect of wrangling a thick continuity and unraveling the inherent challenges of this flooded future. Also, we thought that we were doing a service to all those fans whose favorite books had been canceled and reborn in the strange beast that was the World of Tomorrow.

Luckily for us, once the series started rolling, the occasional compliment would bubble up among the morass of criticism. A bona fide fan would brave the elements and declare proudly, "Hey, I like what you guys are doing! Keep it up!" We had the good fortune of making a few friends out of the deal. There was even a convert or two, who by the fifth issue or so were willing to sit back and enjoy the ride, bumps and all. Perhaps best of all, we had the opportunity to chat it up with our critics, most of whom came to provide us with valuable insight into the characters and history of the future. All of these people were important to us, because in one way or another, they cared about what we were doing. That's high praise, by any standard.

Working on 2099 was a good time for all of us, and we're sad to see it go. It's been a good trip, and we hope that you had half as much fun reading as we did writing. Thank you for your time and energy, but most of all for your support, criticism, and enthusiasm.

Good future to you.

FUTURE, *n.* That period of time in which our affairs prosper, our friends are true and our happiness is assured.
-- Ambrose Bierce

Sincerely,
Joe Kelly and Ben Raab

Attention 2099 subscribers: Since 2099: WORLD OF TOMORROW has been discontinued, your subscription will continue next month with the UNCANNY X-MEN (issue #345), one of Marvel's most x-citing and popular titles. If you already subscribe to UNCANNY X-MEN, your subscription will be extended accordingly. Questions about your subscription? Please contact Marvel Direct Customer Service, P.O. Box 1979, Danbury, CT, 06813-1979, (203) 743-5331.